

ASPENWOLD.



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JOHN J. REED,
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ASPENWOLD.

CHAPTER I.

THERE had been a hard frost the night previous, for the month was October, and upon the long spear-grass still trembled the brilliant dew-drops. Clouds, faintly flushed with crimson, floated lazily in the eastern horizon. The sun was slowly rising, and soon shone brightly upon a pleasant country seat near a small inland village in Kentucky.

Something of unusual importance appeared to be going on in the mansion, although yet so early in the morning. The front windows were carefully closed, but the hall door, opening upon a spacious portico, stood wide open. Servants ran about hastily and looked strangely troubled. A matronly looking mulatto woman, with a fantastically-tied head-kerchief of bright orange and scarlet, came to the front door, and gazing through the long vista of forest trees —which the taste of the owner had preserved about the house— turned slowly away with an air of disappointment, and disappeared within.

The house—a large brick building—stood upon an elevated portion of picturesque forest land, and commanded far-stretching views of the surrounding country. Leading up from the distant village a turnpike-road wound round through the adjacent woodlands, and passing along by the gates opening into the extensive grounds, dis-

appeared behind a neighboring eminence and stretched away to a distant town. Looking from the portico of the mansion, towards the village, one could plainly perceive the approach of any object from that direction long before it drew near.

Some one evidently was anxiously expected. The mulatto woman again appeared in the doorway, and shading her eyes with her hand and standing upon tiptoe, so as to extend the circle of her vision, looked long and intently down the road.

"No. I do n't see nuthin of him. I'm gwine back and tell Mas'r to come and look fur hissef, 'case he won't bleeve me—white folks never will bleeve nothin cullud people sez."

And Aunt Kitty—for so was the woman called—sunk gracefully from her tiptoes, and turning upon her broad heels, walked in with a very deliberate air of self-satisfaction.

Half an hour elapsed, and the large, brightly-tinted pea-fowls swept past, trailing their long, gorgeous trains upon the smooth shaven lawn—proudly inflated turkey cocks, with lofty striding steps, moved grandly by, as though pondering on the mutabilities of this changing world, and wondering when, in the course of fowl events, they should cease to exist and be devoured by ravenous men at Thanksgiving dinners. Snowy geese, floating upon the water of a little lake just visible through the evergreen shrubberies, paddled slowly ashore and vanished, as, tumultuously cackling, they wandered to the woods. Singing birds caroled sadly in the tree-tops, and the morning breeze blew the yellow leaves remorselessly to earth. Hazy mists rose with the sun and floated vapourily through the fading fields and far-away forests.

Presently a gentleman, apparently the owner of the mansion, middle-aged, good looking, and of rather foreign appearance, came to the door to look out. He appeared nervous and agitated, and walked first to one end of the porch and then to the other, gazing steadfastly down the road all the time. Suddenly he stopped, and drawing a heavy gold watch from his fob pocket, scrutinized it closely.

The scrutiny was anything but satisfactory, judging from his

knitted brows and compressed lips. Turning with a stamp of impatience, he again paced the portico with restless footsteps, raising, every few moments, his drooping head, and gazing steadfastly towards the village. At length he paused and listened. There was an indistinct sound of carriage wheels; anon a drifting cloud of dust rose from the road and floated through the foliage. Looking anxiously forward, the gentleman caught a glimpse of a rumbling vehicle, appearing and disappearing, and then coming again into view amidst the overhanging trees. The frown passes from his countenance, and a smile, pleasant and hopeful, succeeds. He walks briskly down the steps, and orders a young, loitering negro boy to run forward and open the gates for the approaching carriage; then as it winds slowly up the serpentine gravel road he hurries hastily forward and assists a jolly-looking old gentleman to alight.

"Ah, doctor, I am so glad you have come."

"What! is she really dangerous, Trevor?"

"I think so," said the gentleman, "but my fears may be groundless."

The physician looked concerned, and giving his whip to the negro boy, slowly drew off his riding gloves and followed Mr. Trevor in silence through the hall to the door of a back room. It was a sick chamber. The light was dim and shadowy, coming through rich purple curtained windows. Several elderly females were moving about in the obscure light as the physician entered and advanced to the bedside. Mr. Trevor closed the door softly after him and remained standing in the hall. Some time elapsed—perhaps a quarter of an hour. Mr. Trevor still remained at the door, and with folded arms, bowed head, and brow wrinkled with trouble, listened tremblingly to the low moans and suppressed cries of agony which proceeded from the chamber. Starting, he looked up inquiringly, as footsteps approached from the inner room. Swinging back noiselessly the door opened, and as the waiting gentleman sprang eagerly forward, the doctor stepping out into the hall, grasped the hand of his friend with cordial eagerness.

"I congratulate you, my dear Trevor—I congratulate you—it is a son—she is doing well."

"A son," repeated Mr. Trevor, excitedly, "Heaven be praised!" and he smiled and was happy, for his prayers were answered—his hopes were realized.

"And she is doing well, you tell me, doctor?" he added, recovering from his joyous abstraction, and gazing earnestly into the physician's eyes.

"Quite well."

"And may I not see the child?"

"Presently, my dear friend."

So, my father taking the good physician's advice, waited patiently—or at least attempted to do so—until my toilet was finished. He was then admitted to see me for the first time. I really do not remember, at this date, how I behaved myself at that memorable interview; but have since been told that I cried lustily, and shook my little red hands impudently in my good papa's face, as he bent over me in admiring fondness.

He thought me a fine, beautiful boy—and so I was He praised my pure Grecian nose—which was undoubtedly worthy of praise—and pronounced my dark eyes glorious! and in this also he was correct.

"What shall we name him, my dear?" said he in a soothingly soft tone, turning towards my mother.

"I do not know," answered a low, musical voice, faintly and with evident pain.

"What shall we call you, my fine little fellow," said my father, chucking me tenderly under the chin, "Eh? What?"

Not liking such rudeness and familiarity upon so short an acquaintance, I resented it by a quick succession of infantile screams.

"He certainly has a good voice. Come, take him, nurse, he is a bad boy."

I screamed louder than before. Nurse took me. And such was my first experience in the world.

CHAPTER II.

The next important event in my life was the bestowal of a name. Father was undecided what to call the little boy. Mother thought of a great many euphonious names, some of which she had heard in society, others learned from novels. But father was emphatic in his opinion that the greater portion of them were too romantic and poetical, and it thus happened that for ten days I was nameless.

Something must be done, and so on the eleventh day a family council was held—for I had three sisters, aged respectively six, four and two years, who were all present, of course. Several of the ladies of the neighborhood were also accidentally at the house, and the doctor having called to see me, was invited to remain. My mother sat up in bed, supported by heaps of downy pillows, and smiling humorously at the whole affair, my father occupied the arm-chair near the table, with a copy of Shakspeare in his hand, and the family Bible upon the table. Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, and Byron's works, were also carefully placed at his elbow. The doctor—an enthusiastic admirer of Ossian—was turning the leaves of the old bard, while Mrs. Hudson—a friend of my mother's—sat close by the bedside, lowly conversing. My three sisters, Helen, 'Bel and Fanny, nestling cozily upon a low, luxurious ottoman, in a distant corner, looked gravely upon the assembly, opening their wondering eyes to each other and whispering confidentially—hazarding strange wonderments as to the probable escape, flight or future destination of the "baby," and timidly, fearfully hoping that all these strange faces would not frighten it away.

The council was now assembled and in order, while I, the object of all this solicitude, was soundly sleeping in my cradle, which was placed near the centre of the room, so as to receive some of the warmth from the wood-fire that blazed cheerfully in the spacious chimney. The indifference I exhibited to the dignified assemblage, and the soundness with which I slumbered, without a name, were certainly astonishing.

"Well," said my father, coughing and clearing his throat.

"Well!" repeated all the company, and then there was an unbroken silence, and every one looked inquiringly around, and then at Mr. Trevor.

"This young gentleman has now been without a name for ten days," commenced my paternal parent, "and we must this afternoon decide upon his future prefix."

"And what is *that* to be?" asked Doctor Joliffe.

"Ah, there is the rub, doctor. There are so many names, that we really cannot agree upon any one."

"Would not Ossian, or Fingal be very pretty?" suggested the physician, looking dreamily down and studying the pattern of the carpet. Company all smiled and exchanged glances. Doctor looked up and found the countenances of the assembly very grave and abstracted.

"Rather too romantic, doctor—beautiful names, though," murmured my mother, smiling.

"I suggest William," observed Mrs. Hudson, diffidently.

"An ugly name," replied the doctor, "they'll call him Bill."

"Well, James, then," said another lady.

"Worse and worse," exclaimed the group. He would never be called anything but Jim."

"You are so hard to satisfy," responded the lady pettishly, "I shall not try any more."

"Suppose you call him Peter," said my mother smiling slily.

"Peter!" echoed the ladies in astonishment, but when they turned to look at my mother she was laughing.

"No—we will have no Peters," replied my father, "he denied his Master."

"Joseph—How would that sound?" asked Mrs. Hudson eagerly, as she glanced inquiringly around.

"I would never have him named that, Trevor," exclaimed the old doctor with a comical expression, "for Joseph was worse than Peter—*he* denied his mistress."

The two gentlemen laughed immoderately, and the ladies all blushed and smilingly covered their faces. When the laughter had subsided and order was once more restored, my father started suddenly, as though remembering something which had almost been forgotten. Drawing forth his watch he examined it attentively.

"Upon my honor! we must get a name soon or let the little fellow go without one. Suppose we leave it to chance?'

All looked with questioning eyes. What did he mean by leaving it to chance? None could possibly imagine.

"You do not seem to understand me, ladies, nor you, doctor?"

"Indeed I do not, my friend," replied the physician; and the ladies were compelled, with some reluctance, to admit that they—although priding themselves upon their penetration and sagacity—did not understand it either.

"I will have to explain, then," said my father. And he proceeded to do so. "I will take the school-book which you have lying upon the table here"—he took it up and read the title page—"The History of the World." "Well, closing the book thus, I will close my eyes also, and open it. As I turn the leaves I will place my finger upon a page, and the proper name nearest my finger point shall unchangeably be that of the young gentleman under consideration."

He ceased speaking, and looked around. My father has since stated, that he had no idea, previously, that the human countenance was susceptible of so many varying expressions as he beheld when making this proposition.

My mother at first would not listen to it. "He might get some

outlandish, heathen name, such as Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Benhadad, Ben-mac-Dhui, or possibly Beelzebub." She could never forgive herself for it; and the child, when he grew up to manhood, would always bear a lurking dislike to his parents for giving him a name that would perhaps subject him to the ridicule of society.

"No, I would not think of such a thing, Mrs. Trevor," exclaimed Mrs. Hudson.

"There is no danger of such an occurrence," answered my father in a tone that was meant to do away with all objection.

"But there is danger," replied his wife, in a determined manner.

The proposer of the scheme looked undecided for a moment.

"Do not get excited, my dear, it may do you great injury."

"I am not getting excited, Mr. Trevor."

"Well, well, if I open to a very heathenish name, we will not give it to the child. Will that satisfy you, ladies, and *you*, particularly, Mrs. Trevor?"

With some remaining reluctance and opposition, my mother finally consented, although she assured them all, that if by such a foolish accident I should get some ridiculous name, she would assuredly have it changed.

Deliberately closing his eyes, and laughing at my mother's opposition, my father placed his hands upon the book, which he held up before him. Running his fingers across the edges of the leaves, he slowly, solemnly opened it. All bent eagerly forward in an attitude of breathless curiosity. Placing his first finger upon the open page he gently moved it about for a few moments and then fixed it in the middle of a paragraph.

"The die is cast," he exclaimed, opening his eyes.

The company rushed excitedly forward, and my mother hid her face in the pillow with vexation. The proper name nearest the point was "America!" All were disappointed.

"It shall not be," exclaimed my mother with emphasis. "What an absurd idea—heaping two continents on the poor child's head. Why not call him Atlas at once, Mr. Trevor, and let him support the whole world!"

"Well, we will change it to Atlas if *you* desire it, my dear."

"Do not make sport of *me*, Mr. Trevor."

My father was touched, for the soft voice slightly trembled, and a tear started unconsciously from the dark blue eyes of the speaker. He rose and went to the bedside, while the remainder of the party conversed together around the cradle. At the sound of their mother's tremulous voice, my little sisters had left their quiet nook, and with sympathetic tears gathered around the bed.

"Forgive me, dearest Madelaine, forgive me—I but jested."

Bending down over the white pillows, he fondly kissed the tear-drop away, and then clasping the little girls caressingly to his bosom, kissed them also. Smiles chased away the tears as the April sunshine drinks the rain-drops, and all again were happy.

"So, we will not call him America, then," said my father.

"If *you* wish it, Edgar, I will not object. But why not prefix your own name, and call him Edgar A., (my mother would not pronounce the word) Edgar A. Trevor."

"Certainly—why did we not think of this before. 'Twould have saved *you* a tear, Madelaine, dearest."

"So the name is to be prefixed by yours—is it, Trevor?"

"Yes, doctor."

"I am really and truly glad of anything to please the ladies, and as the gallant old Irish lord was wont to remark, 'the only way a true gentleman will ever attempt to look at the faults of a pretty woman is—*to shut his eyes*."

"But doctor—"

"I must positively be off instantly, Mrs. Trevor—patient far gone in a collapse—just at the point of death—no hope—Adieu, ladies—your servant, Mrs. Trevor." And the doctor was gone.

"Thank heaven it is over at last," ejaculated my mother. "America shall be dropped—and his only name be Edgar Trevor."

My father laughed and hurried away, and sleeping quietly in the cradle, as though nothing had occurred, the sound fell upon me as silently as the dew falls upon flowers, and—I was named.

CHAPTER III.

Before proceeding farther with my own personal history, I may as well go back a few years, and relate some incidents connected with the former lives of my parents. Both were of Scottish origin—my mother, by the paternal side, being a grand-daughter of Lord Balcour, of Balcour Castle. It was perfectly natural that my mother should be somewhat vain of this; and, as she often said, "no persons are so prone to sneer at the pride of ancestry as those who are in blissful ignorance of the existence of a grand-father."

Pride of birth alone is assuredly contemptible; but Lord Balcour was not only a nobleman of ancient descent and illustrious lineage, but, what was of far more consequence, had been celebrated in his day as a person of rare scientific and literary acquirements. My father's parentage was respectable, though not noble. His ancestors were wealthy manufacturers in one of the large towns of northern Scotland, and at the time of the marriage he also had commenced business for himself, aided by his father's capital. Financial embarrassments, however, soon came upon him, and to cut short a long story, and compress into one word—one terrible word, the whole—he was——*ruined!*

Then the idea of emigrating to America first entered his mind; and, wearied and harassed with doubts, he cherished it. My mother strenuously objected, and would not hear it spoken of. The United States were, to her, only a Canaan for distressed bankrupts, and a refuge for flying, fool hardy patriots from all parts of Europe. What! leave "dear bonnie Scotland," with its refinements and elegancies—the amenities of civilized and cultivated life—for a land

of almost barbarian rudeness, where the people dwelt in log-cabins, and lived upon wild deer, buffalo tongues, and hominy! Horrible! outrageous! Not that she entertained the opinion common in those days, even among the educated, that *all* the Americans lived in this manner, for she knew that the inhabitants of the Eastern States did not; but then it was to the West my father spoke of going, and that, in her opinion, was synonymous with—— New Zealand.

At length my father prevailed so far that she did not object to the intention he expressed, of first going out himself, upon a sort of exploring tour, to examine the country and observe the character of its inhabitants.

He left Scotland. He arrived in the United States, and writing back to his wife and friends, gave them a glowing description of the new country. Like the olden Canaan, it was a land flowing with milk and honey, and running with wild deer besides. The skies were clear, the scenery glorious, the rivers grand, and the prairies and forests boundless. It apparently had far surpassed his expectations, and the letter plainly indicated his desire to make this new world his permanent home. He entreated my mother to come out to him, and sought to lure her by his descriptions of the happiness that was in store for them. But she shook her head, and doubted. Could the happiness of the future surpass that of the past? Could a new home be to her the same as the one of her birth? and were new friends better than old and tried ones? She could not calmly consent to part with all she loved, and scenes that were endeared to her by the memories of childhood, and leave them without a struggle or regret. And then there was the dreary ocean to be traversed before reaching the new country; and once passed, its waves would separate her forever from her home.

She told him all this, and much more in her letter, and begged him to return.

But he wrote again, enclosing a draft, and entreating her presence more earnestly than before.

At length, wearied with his importunities, fearing that he might

not return for many years, and prevailed upon by the advice of their mutual friends, she hesitatingly gave her consent to join him. How mournfully and regretfully the determination was finally made, and with what a reluctant hand announced, he who received it little knew. Many tears had been shed upon her lowly pillow at midnight, as, tossing sleeplessly, she prayed for help from above in this sore trial. Many a sad gaze had she turned upon each familiar object, and remembered that in the past they had never been so dear; but now, when about to leave them forever, each chair seemed mutely beseeching her to stay. The sofa, upon which her young husband had first clasped her to his arms, and imprinted the kiss of love and purity, met her eye as she looked around The old carved secretary, in whose drawers nestled the tiny love notes of her youth, sadly and silently appealed to her. Every household object, to her, whispered a language unknown to other ears. Even the cradle, in which she had rocked her first born, and bedewed with tears of holy happiness, and the pillows, where had nestled the curly head of infancy, must, with the rest, pass into the hands of strangers. Never before had she so bitterly regretted the hastily given promise to my father; never before had she so acutely realized the anguish of soul it necessitated.

The household furniture was put up and sold at public auction. Pillows she had reposed upon, that were doubly dear as the gift of a departed mother, had passed away with the dreams they had inspired.

Presents had been bestowed upon relatives and friends. Mementoes, valueless—but oh, how precious to those who received them!—had been sadly distributed, and the long, dreary passage engaged. Her mother's grave—visited for the last time, perhaps, in this life, and seamed with burning tears—was reluctantly left behind, and the haunts of her infancy and girlhood looked upon once more before leaving them forever.

The morning arrived when the "Flying Cloud" was to sail. My mother was early on board. My two little sisters were clinging

wildly to her dress, and sobbing with all the frantic violence of impetuous childhood.

Lingering friends, after striving in vain to soothe and cheer her for the voyage of long, weary weeks, had fervently embraced, and, murmuring prayers through their tears, had stepped into the little boat which was to bear them to the shore.

The anchor heaved, the white sails fluttered in the breeze. My mother stood gazing her last upon those loved shores, and searching with wild, wailing eyes for one more glimpse of the little bark which held her friends. A bounding wave wildly heaves it up. She catches, for a moment, a sight of a fluttering handkerchief; she hears, amid the dashing of the waters, the last floating word of affection, and sinks upon a heap of cables to weep without restraint. Her little daughters, breaking away from the tearful nurse, clasp convulsively her bended form, and mingle their tears with hers.

The rushing waters dash high the cleft foam of the sea, as the Flying Cloud, dropping down the bay, drifts slowly out with the freshening wind toward the wild, wide ocean.

The land dimly recedes in the lengthening distance. Through mists of tears that will not be repressed, she gazes mournfully, and her heart leaps yearningly to the lost home of her youth.

The breeze rises and fills the spreading canvass; the masts bend, and the ship cleaves the sparkling waters, rolling boundlessly away before her. The headlands of Scotland are soon left far behind, and vanish in the hazy horizon.

Swifter and wilder speeds the Flying Cloud. Bright before her prow leap the white waves of the ocean, and far in her wake close the creamy-crested furrows.

Scotland—loved, lost Scotland—was seen no more!

CHAPTER IV.

After a weary voyage of six weeks the vessel arrived safely at New York. My mother, aided by the kind attention and assistance of some of her husband's friends, to whom she had letters of introduction, was soon able to proceed on her way to Kentucky. A long and tedious journey it was in those days, but she arrived at her destination with my two young sisters, and met with no accident or detentions.

Although traveling entirely alone, she was uniformly treated with the greatest courtesy and politeness by every one with whom she was compelled to come in contact.

She found my father doing well, and inhabiting what was at that time considered a very fine mansion. He received her and my sisters with the greatest demonstrations of joy, and overwhelmed them with questions of home and Scotland. He almost danced from excessive nervous delight; gave a dozen orders to the servants at once, and immediately afterwards countermanded them all; sat down with a jerk, and instantly jumped up again; kissed Helen and Bel one moment, and pinched their ears the next; in fact, did all sorts of extravagant things, and then laughed at them himself. My mother did not betray any such excessive pleasure. That she was happy to see him, he could not doubt; but then she seemed disappointed also. The country was not such as she had glowingly anticipated, and every thing in such a new state was so very different from what she had been accustomed to.

The inhabitants she looked upon with scarcely concealed disgust, for this was more than twenty years ago; and the residence which

her husband had prepared as his home, disappointed her sadly by its contrast to the dear old home, with all its conveniences and comforts, which she had left "over the water." Excitements and the ever-varying incidents of the journey had hitherto prevented her from feeling sad; but now, that it was over, and hope could no more depend upon imagination to throw a veil of beauty over the unknown home she was going to, she gave way to regrets and sad, complaining longings, which the pleasure of again seeing her husband after so long a separation could not altogether dispel.

Time, however, had its usual effect, and my mother soon learned to be content—to cease to repine over what was now unchangeable, and to become satisfied with her lot.

The mansion was enlarged and beautified. Grounds were enclosed, planted, and laid out into gravel walks and drives, and every object of natural beauty taken advantage of to heighten the effect of the surrounding scenery.

The situation was picturesque and imposing, and the old trees of the forest, which in clumps of irregular wildness were scattered about the grounds, were all left standing, and walks laid out through them—the house being upon an eminence, commanded, in every direction, views of remarkable beauty. Through the shaded vistas of the forest, the eye fell upon waving, cultivated fields, rolling meadows, and green pastures, far-stretching woodlands, gently swelling hills, and flowery vales; and, winding through all, a rushing stream with its cool glimpses of dashing water. Cattle and sheep grazed quietly, knee deep, in the meadow clover blossoms, and a timid herd of wild deer—which my father had purchased to adorn the grounds—peeped warily from out the gnarled woods, and at the slightest noise bounded fleetly away, tossing their antlers proudly in the air.

Many aspen trees had formerly been planted about the house, and rare shrubberies were also added to the natural beauties of the place.

Time passed pleasantly in these delightful occupations, and my

mother soon began to like, and then to love the place which she had, by her taste, rendered so beautiful; and she called its name ASPENWOLD!

Happiness and contentment reigned over all, and as the spring flowers bloomed in its gay parterres, the mistress of Aspenwold felt the blooming of peace within her heart; and as she added another to the little daughters who had crossed the stormy Atlantic with her, she called it Fanny, and kissed the sweetest flower of all her blossom-burdened gardens.

Having a great number of slaves, my father cultivated an extensive estate: his herds of cattle browsed upon the neighboring hill sides, and his horses roamed in the green pastures.

At my birth he was the richest man in the neighborhood where he resided, and one of the most opulent in the State.

CHAPTER V.

At five years of age I was sent to school. My mother, however, having taught me the alphabet before I started, I astonished the Yankee school teacher by repeating all the letters to him the very first morning.

This was considered something really extraordinary in those days, and I was highly complimented for my progressive tendencies.

"Precocious boy," exclaimed Mr. Eliah Dowd, ruffling the iron grey plumage of his head with his long bony fingers, "precocious boy." And straightway I was placed in a class where I learned to spell b-a ba, c-a ca, d-a da, and so on.

From the age of five years until ten, I was kept almost constantly at school. I learned like other urchins of my age—perhaps a little more rapidly—received an occasional whipping, like them also, for eating apples and peaches during school hours, when, in the language of Mr. Eliah Dowd, I should have been "acquiring the elements of knowledge,"—and like them cried and forgot it. "Who knows, young gentlemen," said our teacher, "but what some one of you, if he is attentive and industrious, and studies hard, may yet be President of these United States!"

"To slide upon the cellar door and swing upon the gates," whispered a mischievous little fellow cracking a hazel nut.

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Dowd, on hearing the treasonable remark. "Absalom Jones, come forward, sir."

Absalom obeyed, with his dog-eared primmer stuck in one cor-

ner of his mouth, and his hand rubbing out the tears that could not trickle down his cheeks for the dirt that impeded them.

"What was that you were whispering to Peter Jenkins, sir?" asked Mr. Dowd of the trembling boy, as he grasped him by the coat collar, and raised him from the floor.

"I was tellin' Pete, please, sir," gasped the boy, "that daddy was goin' to fix the cellar doors, and hang all the gates."

"Ah, go back to your seat now, sir." Mr. Dowd gave him a blow upon the side of the head with his ponderous hand, and saved the howling urchin the trouble of a walk, by precipitating him instantly into his place. "You will now know when to whisper, sir, when I am enunciating a remark. Don't lift your eyes from that book, sir, until your lesson is all learned, mark it, sir. I will punish you most severely if you do not know it."

Mr. Dowd walked to his desk, and taking out three long, springy sprigs of birch, tried their quality by bending them against the floor. "As I was saying, young gentlemen," continued the schoolmaster, "by hard study any of you may soon become President, for this is a land of glorious equality, and everybody is as free as the wind, except the niggers, and they, fortunately, havn't got any souls. Just look, how easy it is to become a President. Why, any third-rate lawyer makes a good one, and men of talent now-a-days had better climb a tree, or go to teaching school, as I do. Come forward, the spelling class."

And thus passed the early years of my life. I experienced all the fresh, delightful pleasures of early childhood—its heart-filling joys, and its sobbing, but evanescent anguishes and troubles—cried and smiled, and forgot.

These early years may never return again, nor can I candidly say I would wish them. Physically delicate, and extremely sensitive in my early boyhood, I was, at school and upon the play ground, always teased and tormented by the rude play of boys of my own age. I ever dreaded the approach of the hours which we were allowed us for play, and usually separated myself from the

more noisy of my companions, and wandered away with some shrinking class-mate to the solitude of the woods, which upon all sides surrounded the school house

After dark, during the long winter evenings, my mother would assist me with my lesson, and then as it was all memorised and carefully conned over, the little dog-eared book was carefully laid away.

Calling me to her side, and bidding me be seated upon the low-cushioned stool at her feet, while the wind blew drearily upon the outside, and the snow drifted, and the sleet dashed against the window shutters, and the storms of winter howled wildly among the moaning tree tops, she would tell me strange, wondrous legends of Scotland and of Fairy-land. Tales of its border chivalry, legends of its old castles—which she herself had visited—stories of knights and tournaments, and fair ladies with golden locks and lily white hands—Blue lakes far away in the Highlands, sleeping in the moonbeams, with hills surrounding covered with bonnie blue bells, and purple heath, with flowery valleys between, where the midnight fairies in green kirtles danced rollicking little reels upon the heather blooms beneath the bright moonlight. Wonderingly I listened to it all, and never wearied as I gazed up into my mother's eyes, often swimming in tears at the recollection of the pleasant, happy years she had enjoyed there, which the air of some old ballad sung by my sisters would rushingly recall.

How eagerly I drank in every word which fell from her lips, and how yearningly I wished I was a man so that I could go back to that beautiful land of dreams and poetry which had been my mother's home. I lay often awake, child though I was, far in the night thinking of all I had heard, dreaming of the time when I should also be old enough to *live*, for being such a "wee bit" of a boy now, I did not, could not know anything of life. For long years after I have often looked back to this time when these legends and old ballads exerted over me a charm, and caused a mysteriously enthusiastic thrill of joy which was at once intoxication, bliss and

heaven. Like the years which they crowned with happiness, the charm has passed away, and though the altar is raised, the sacrifice upon it, and all prepared, yet the fire will not descend, for alas, the enthusiastic faith of childhood is gone.

I pondered of all these things in my waking hours and at night, with imagination all aglow, sunk to sleep and fancied I heard the tiny bells tinkling upon dancing fairy ankles, and the winding horns of Elfland, echoing among the moonlit mountains of my dreams.

CHAPTER VI.

ELEVEN winters had glided over my head—eleven summers had burst their buds and shed their blossoms at my feet. My birthday had been celebrated with joyous delight. And I was happy. Nothing had occurred during the day to dim the calm serenity of that happiness; but at night, when I knelt down at my mother's knee, to repeat my prayers, I could not but observe her strangely troubled expression of countenance. There was care and sorrow, and a vague, undefined dread, all blended in that expression. I was troubled.

"Are you sick, mamma?" asked I, rising and tenderly kissing her before going to bed.

"No, my dear—not sick," answered she, forcing a smile that came very sadly, and only lingered a moment.

I looked another question with my dark, bright eyes, but did not speak. She met my earnest, sympathizing gaze for a short time, and then bent over to kiss me, when a tear fell involuntarily from her eye, and dropped upon my cheek. It penetrated to my heart, for I then knew that my mother *was* burdened with some mysterious sorrow, which she could not tell me, because she feared I would not understand it. And I was correct in my surmise.

"What *is* the matter, mamma?—has anything happened to papa or my sisters?"

No answer—but an unconsciously convulsive clasp, which pressed me close to a heart that was beating wildly—tumultuously. A burning hot kiss upon my temples—a quick ejaculation, moistened with tears—a tremulous voice, heavy with sorrow—and my mother recovered her calm, self-command.

She then rang a little hand-bell which stood upon the table, and a mulatto girl appeared.

"Dorah, take Edgar to bed now—he is weary and sleepy after the day's pleasure—one kiss more, dearest—now good night, good night, and may the angels guard you."

How soft and flute-like was her voice! O, how I loved my mother at that moment, and yet I did not understand her. To-morrow I should. And "to-morrow" came, but it was to-day.

Dark and dismally drear it seemed, as I unclosed my eyes from troubled dreamings. Gloomy clouds drifted afar through the leaden sky, and mournful winds moaned through the tree-tops. It was early autum, and the yellow leaves were beginning to fall—not one by one, as in summer—but in showers and drifts. Winds shook them coldly from the swaying-boughs, and drenched them with chilling showers as they fell to earth. "Orphaned leaves, poor homeless leaves," I murmured, "the wind that robbed you of the parent-tree, will hearse you to a grave, and out of your decay will spring the summer flowers with starry petals." They seemed to me endowed with life, those yellow, faded leaves, and I pitied them, and wept, I knew not why.

As I finished dressing—which was often interrupted to gaze through the windows—the bell sounded for breakfast. I had no appetite, but I went down mechanically, and found my father and sisters seated at the table awaiting me. Proud to think they should consider me a person of so much importance, I was sensibly flattered. But a glance at their faces turned the current of my thoughts. The happy smile faded away—the joyous ejaculation died upon my lips.

My father shook hands and kissed me, as was his custom; and each of my sisters kissed me also, as I went around to them. It was done, however, with a mixture of sorrowing fondness and pleasure, which I could not comprehend. Chilled and fearful, I was afraid to ask a question.

"Mamma—where is she?" said I to Fanny, in great concern at her absence.

"Only gone into the next room to get a teaspoon."

The answer re-assured me, but I was not satisfied. My mother came in presently, and I ran up eagerly to kiss her. Bending down smilingly she pressed her lips to my temples. We then took our places, and breakfast proceeded. It was a gloomy meal, for every one seemed thoughtful and embarrassed, so different from our usual pleasant morning reunions, when all had talked so gaily and laughed so cheerily at each little witticism. My father ate with an abstracted air, and forgot to put sugar in his coffee. I reminded him of it.

My mother sat at the head of the table, but scarcely touched anything, and Helen and Bel seemed absent and sorrowful. I sipped a small quantity of coffee, but swallowed it with such evident trouble, that I soon desisted and commenced playing with my spoon. What was it that had such an omnipotent influence to shadow a household?

Asking my father what had occurred, he merely replied that it was some matter of business, which I was not yet old enough to understand. And that was all the satisfaction I could get. Soon afterwards, arising from the table, he left the room, and we could hear him at intervals upon the piazza, hurriedly walking back and forth. After he had gone, Helen looked up and her eyes met my mother's. The "electric chain wherewith we are darkly bound," seemed touched. Tears sprang simultaneously to the eyes of each. Fanny wept too, and I threw my arms around my young sister's neck and sobbed bitterly. It was contagious, for we were all in tears.

"What will we do, mamma?" asked Helen, attempting to command her voice and speak calmnly.

"Heaven only knows! we are among strangers, in a strange land, and God only can guide us."

"But so sudden—so unexpected."

"I always believed the man was an unprincipled scoundrel," exclaimed my usually mild mother, with flashingly indignant eyes. "I

do not often mistake or misinterpret countenances, and his displeased me the first time I ever saw it."

"Why did you not speak of it to papa, and caution him, mamma?" said Bel, timidly.

"I did speak of it, my child, but he only laughed and playfully ridiculed me—called my fancies strange and absurd, and said my doubts and fears were utterly groundless. What could I do more? I perceived that he was determined not to see as I did, and further explanation would have been of no avail."

"And shall we leave, dear, dear Aspenwold, that we have become so much attached to?" asked Fanny, in a tremulous tone.

"I cannot tell," replied her mother slowly, as though afraid to trust her voice, for fear her tears should interrupt her. "Isn't it time you were preparing for school, Edgar?" she added, seeking to divert her thoughts.

"O, it is quite early yet, mamma—pray tell me what you were all crying about—I know something has happened; do tell me, I won't tell any one."

She looked yearningly into my eyes. I ran to her outstretched arms, and gazed earnestly into her face, yet wet with tears.

"You would not understand it, my dear boy—some other day, when you are older, I will tell you."

"Yes, I will, mamma, try me and see—I understand a great many things!" I spoke confidently and hastily, but she looked down mournfully and then glanced at Helen. My sister shook her head, and turning to me, as she parted my soft, brown curls from my forehead, my mother was about to speak, when my father entered.

'You ought to be starting to school, Edgar—isn't it near the hour?" said he softly and kindly.

"Yes, sir," I answered, longing to oblige him, for he was so gentle, and I felt that it was so very little *I* could do. So, leaving the room, I went away to get my satchel and cap. When I had found them I again returned to the apartment, but upon entering they all

ceased talking, and my mother told me tenderly to take care of myself and learn fast, and my father calling me to his side, fastened my satchel and showed me how to carry it with ease.

Helen inquired if I had combed my hair, it looked so wild and curly, but Bel told me to go on, as it looked better as it was. All these remarks were forced, and I could feel it, child though I was. They were intended to make me believe that the disagreeable subject had passed away. I knew better than this. Passing through the hall I went slowly down the steps, and pausing a moment to look around me, started to the school-house. I lingered in the grounds of Aspenwold, loth to pass the gate and descend into the old wood, which stretched away beyond them. But now, arriving at the extreme limit, I halted a moment to survey the lovely far-extending landscape ; and then passing slowly through the gateway, loitered listlessly along the path which had been worn by the cattle and horses. The conversation at the breakfast table had cast a shadow of sadness over me, and I did not whistle so gaily in walking along as I was wont. Unconsciously walking faster than I supposed, the house and grounds soon disappeared from sight. A large meadow, sown in clover and blue grass, divided the wildest part of the forest from the grounds immediately adjacent to the mansion, and a bubbling, rippling rivulet ran noisily through it. Crossing this upon stones which had been placed by the servants in the bed of the stream, I plunged into the cool, twilight shades of the forest, for though yet early in the morning, the closely interlaced boughs prevented the sun's brightness from penetrating, and within its depths there ever reigned a dreamy, glowing light. After passing the wildest parts, the trees ceased to grow so closely together, and the scenery became more diversified. In some portions of the forest which I had crossed, the thickets of underwood had been so luxuriant and wild that one could not see a hundred paces distant. Gnarled oaks were scattered about, towering gigantically heavenward. Ash trees, maples and mulberries were grouped with the hickory and walnut in contiguous gracefulness. Pendant vines

of the wild grape, grappling the topmost branches of the lordliest trees, hung earthward, heavy with purple clusters. A wandering wind, trembling at its own impious intrusion, stirred the dreamlike stillness of the autumnal air, and fluttered the crimson-hued leaf of the maple—whispering of impending doom and death to the fading green and golden-tinted foliage. Occasionally a daring squirrel would disturb the solemn stillness by a hazardous leap to a neighboring tree-top, shaking the frost-loosed white walnuts in showers to the earth. Cows wandered gravely about in the dim distant vistas like monks in an olden abbey, and, startled at my footfalls, looked up rebukingly at the intrusion. The hazy atmosphere of Indian summer—that delightful dream which only the American seasons indulge in—brooded like a half-heavenly mist of odorous incense over the landscape. Autumn's first frost, like a withering wand, had touched the murmuring leaves, and towering sugar-maples, like hectic-hued consumptives, seemed sighing to the winds their plaintive farewells. Crimson wax berries and wild plums grew tremulous in the breath of the shifting breeze, and the yellow paw-paws swayed listlessly, and fell to the earth, bursting with mellow ripeness. Afar upon the dreamy air came the faintly-muffled sounds of the woodman's axe, preparing the winter firewood—then a crashing, thundering sound, reverberating through all the forest with innumerable echoes, told to the denizens of the woods that another great one had fallen among them. Loitering birds still twittered in the trees, and ever and anon a rushing cloud of wild pigeons would darken the air as they passed, and the monotonous caw! caw! of the thieving crows, pierced the lulled, still atmosphere. Stepping along briskly, I drank in the delicious air, stopping every few moments to gather the black, shining acorns, and then again hurrying on, trampling the fallen, rustling leaves beneath my feet. In passing an overhanging grape-vine, a large, ripe cluster of wild grapes tempted me to pluck them. Halting, I measured the distance with my eye, and threw my satchel upon the withered grass. A crackling sound among the dead branches and crisp leaves startled me. I looked hastily around, but saw nothing to fear.

CHAPTER VII.

Throwing my cap upon the ground beside the satchel, I made a spring to catch the hanging vine, missed my aim, and fell with my face to the earth.

An outstretched arm kindly assisted me to arise, and a voice—a disagreeable, affected voice—said to me, "get up, my lad, get up, many another in this world has missed his object, like you, and fallen." I disliked his tones before seeing his countenance.

"I could have risen without your help, sir," replied I sneeringly, my angry eyes flashing upon him, as I measured him from head to foot. And what a very queer, strange looking object he was. A misshapen head, sat unevenly upon humped shoulders, from which hung two long ape-like arms, terminating in milk-white hands, with finger nails almost as long as a Chinese mandarin, but scrupulously clean, a chest swelling out abnormally, protuberently large and thick short legs, with very small feet, yellowish soft hair, curling slightly, but scant, and greenish grey eyes leering laughingly at my impotent anger.

Such was the person I saw before me. He was fashionably dressed, in a dark blue cloth coat, buff vest, and black pantaloons, and from his fob swung a heavy gold chain. I was not afraid of him, though his unexpected appearance in this unfrequented place, at such a time, might have caused me to feel slightly nervous. I was only angry. After staring at him a moment with an expression in which contempt, loathing and anger were blended mosaically—"who are you?" said I impudently.

"Your grandfather," replied the deformed, demurely.

"O, get out,' and I spoke incredulously, and with a tone that I

would have used in driving away a troublesome puppy. Regarding me with his strange, disagreeable smile, he laughed a loud, chuckling laugh, and shrugged his shoulders. It made me shudder slightly, for I had heard the same sound echoing in the long galleries when visiting the State Insane Asylum, with my father, a few months before.

Looking at me steadily with his snaky eyes, he spoke. "You don't believe me, eh?"

"No, where did you come from?"

Opening his eyes with awe, he smiled again, and pointed with his long, bony fingers downwards.

"Came from the devil, did you, old fellow?" The remark seemed to amuse him exceedingly, for he laughed immoderately and showed his white glittering teeth as though proud of them. I believed they were all false. His shrill, screeching laughter rung over the wood, and came crackling back multiplied by innumerable echoes. For all my assumed boldness, I was growing afraid of the strange creature. The thought became fixed in my mind that he was insane, and had probably just escaped from confinement. "What if I should tell you all about yourself, and of your father and mother before they left Scotland." He paused. I returned his look contemptuously. "You doubt my power to do so?"

Looking nervously around me, I did not answer.

"What was that standing behind you?" faltered the deformed, shuddering, and appearing greatly alarmed.

I sprang tremblingly away. My companion shrieked with wild laughter, and clapped his hands in childish glee, then, recovering from his merriment, he ran up to where I was standing.

"O it was not anything," said he coaxingly, "do not be afraid." Attempting to place his hand endearingly upon my arm, I shook it off, drew back hastily, and waved him angrily away.

"Will you listen to me if I tell you all about your relatives in 'Auld Scotia,'" continued my tormentor, stepping up to me again stealthily.

"I must go to school," said I abruptly, "stand aside and let me pass."

"We will walk along together, then, my little man, for I am going in the same direction."

"No one wants your company," sneered I, with an assumption of indifference, shrugging my shoulders haughtily, as I had seen my mother do when she wished to emphasise her contempt.

"Ho! ho! getting proud are you—great grandfather was a poor Scotch lord, was he?" And the deformed finished the sentence with a sneering laugh.

"I wish you was where you came from."

"Where is that, my little manny?"

I pointed downwards. "Don't call me your little manny, again. I shall have nothing more to do with you."

"Ha! ha! ha! how spiteful the little Trevor is."

Starting, I looked astonished as he repeated my name, for I was not before aware that he was acquainted with it.

"You see I know all about you."

"Well," said I deliberately.

"Well," repeated he, imitating my tone and then subduing his voice to a pleasant monotone, he continued, "you see, Edgar—oh, you need not start again—I know your name very well, and your history, too. Now let us make peace, be friends and not quarrel any more." He extended his hand.

Looking fixedly into his eyes, to see if he was really in earnest, I touched his palm in the same manner as I would have placed my fingers upon a toad.

He did not appear to like my manner, but only smiled to hide his vexation.

We then walked along silently together, as the path became somewhat broader. I had not yet entirely recovered from my repugnance and fear, and watched my dwarfish companion closely, to prevent him from doing anything to me should he really prove to be insane, as I was still disposed to believe. Keeping slightly

in advance, I intended, should he attempt any violence, to outrun him, for I was perfectly satisfied that this could be done. At any rate, he might be decoyed away into some intricate labyrinth, and I thus escape amid the rank undergrowth. But he attempted nothing of the kind.

"I formerly lived in Scotland."

"Did you?" I exclaimed, interrupting him in surprise.

"Yes, and I have heard of your mother there before she married Trevor. Her name was Madelaine Lindsey, the belle of the country. Many were the admirers she had then, and one among them loved her, O, how wildly and passionately, (his voice became soft and tremulous,) but she rejected him although titled and immensely wealthy, and gave her hand to a vulgar tradesman."

His voice changed to a tone of bitterness, and contempt curled his lip haughtily.

"And she did right to reject him, sir, if she could not love him."

"*Love!* what the deuce do you know about love?" muttered my companion with intense contempt.

"About as much as you do."

"You inherit all your mother's pride and scornfulness, I perceive."

"Yes, and dislike of little deformed dwarfish wretches like——"

"Beware, sir!" cried the man, assuming a tone of proud command, as his eyes gleamed angrily.

"But I am foolish to quarrel with a child, pray who taught you my boy, to dislike deformed people? Did not God make them such as you see?"

I answered sheepishly, "yes."

"They ought rather to be pitied, and treated with kindness, instead of being loathed and ridiculed. I suppose your mother learned you to abhor the deformed, for the lover who worshiped her as the Hindoo does his god, was a *dwarf*."

And he hissed the last word forth as though each syllable burned his tongue.

" I never heard my mother speak of any dwarfs, except the ones we read about in the story books, and they are always such ugly, wicked creatures, that I hate to hear of them."

He listened attentively while I was speaking, but his countenance underwent no change of expression.

" And so your mother never spoke to you of a deformed man who in his vainglorious heart dared aspire to her fair hand?"

" Never."

" And never ridiculed with cutting irony, the proposal which this person bowing to the dust before her youthful beauty laid at her feet?"

" No, sir, never."

He seemed relieved, and muttered something which I did not hear. Relapsing after this, into deep thought, he walked rapidly and nervously onwards, twitching involuntarily the gold watch chain, and seeming to forget my presence.

The effort of keeping up with him, made me pant for breath; I stopped, and, observing it, he halted also.

" Ah! I had forgotten, was I making you walk too fast? Poor little fellow, let me carry your satchel."

His voice sunk to a soothing softness, as he patted my head tenderly, and looked pityingly into my eyes.

" How like his mother," said he musingly to himself.

Having recovered my breath, I commenced walking on with him again, for I was unconsciously beginning to like my strange companion.

" Did *you* know my mother?" asked I looking at him closely.

The abruptness of the question embarrassed him slightly, and he replied evasively. " Yes—no—that is, I have met her in society."

" And did you know the dwarf that you say loved mamma?"

" Quite well, he was my friend."

" She did not know how he loved her, or I know she would have pitied him."

" Indeed," responded the man scornfully—" how far is it through this wood?"

"Only a short distance, you see the hill just before us?"

"Yes."

"Well, as soon as we get to the hill top we will be past the thickest part of the woods, and can then see the school house."

Nodding his head, he said abstractedly, "yes."

We soon reached the slight eminence which I had called a hill, and from thence could survey cultivated fields, meadows, and distant woodlands stretching far away. We paused simultaneously, and stood gazing admiringly around.

"What stream is that, Edgar, beyond the school house, winding away in the distance? I can just catch a glimpse of the water, as the sun gleams upon it."

"The Winnepoga," said I, eager to give any information I could. The Indians gave it that name."

"Are you going any farther?" I asked, seeing that he did not answer, but stood still.

"No, Edgar, my dear boy," (speaking slowly and sadly,) "we must part here beneath this old tree, but before I leave you I have to ask you to confer upon me a great favor."

"What is it?" I enquired cautiously.

"Nothing that will cost you a moment's trouble. When you return home I do not wish you to tell any one that you have seen such a person as me, nor do not speak of anything I have told you. If your mother should ask any questions about this,"—and he held out to me a small, richly chased gold pencil—"you can say that a gentleman whom you met going through the woods, gave it to you."

Extending my hand, I took it doubtingly.

"This you know will not be telling a falsehood—God forbid that I should ask you to do that—you will repeat what I have requested, will you not, Edgar?"

"Yes, sir, I will," responded I sincerely.

"It will not be necessary to say that the person whom you met was dwarfish and deformed, and so awkward and misshapen that when he walks abroad street-boys laugh, even as they did at Peter

Schemeiel—the man who sold his shadow to the devil—and dogs run away and snarl at him. You will not tell all this, Edgar?"

"No, sir, I will not speak of it" And my heart pitied him.

"Farewell! your school bell rings. Never mention me, but preserve my present. 'Tis sweet to die and think that some one loves us, and recalls our memory, even though aided by presents. We may meet again."

He gave me his hand, which was soft and fair as a woman's, not like a toad did it seem to me now, and I clasped it cordially, for the possessor of it had a heart, though like the gold of Neveda, enquartzed in hardness.

Boy as I was then, I could not understand why he did not wish to be spoken of, but instinctively connected it with his former acquaintance, or rather his knowledge of my mother, for he had denied the acquaintance. Suddenly remembering, as I started off, that he had not told me his name—"But what shall I call you?" I cried, running back.

"Call me—Be-el-Zebub." The former tone of satirical badinage was again assumed, and the ironical sneer disfigured his face.

Studying him fixedly with my clear, bright eyes, I smiled. The school bell rung again.

"Good bye, Beelzebub," shouted I, running off and calling back over my shoulder, "good bye."

My strange friend stood looking smilingly at me as I moved away. "Good bye, little Edgar, may God protect you." He wafted an adieu, gracefully, with his hand and stepped back.

Removing my cap, and waving it over my head, I shouted again, "good bye, little Beelzebub," and still continuing to run, I had almost lost sight of him. Turning when near the school house door, he was still to be seen, standing under the tree where we had parted, gazing absently after me. As I halted, I saw him move away and disappear in the shadows of the woods.

"Poor, poor Beelzebub!" murmured I tenderly.

CHAPTER VIII.

"WHAT ?—what's that, sir—who was you speaking of?" asked a nervous, halting voice, full of dashes and interrogation points.

Looking down abashed, I blushed to my temples. Raising my eyes slowly two keen grey orbs met them, and seemed to peer through and gaze into my soul. I felt their influence before I looked up, and when my eyes met the keen, inquisitive grey ones, I believed my secret was all known. They appeared to have mesmerized it out of me.

"Why do you not answer me, Edgar Trevor, who was it you spoke of just as I arrived at the portal of the door ?"

Mr. Eliah Dowd, my dreaded teacher, looked down authoritatively and closed his lips.

"Beelzebub," responded I, falteringly.

"What do you know of that most diabolical incarnation of sin ?"

"I met him."

"What !" ejaculated Mr. Dowd, opening his mouth, eyes and ears in overpowering astonishment.

"Where ! where did you meet that Satanic embodiment of iniquity ?"

I told him "in the woods," and pointed with my trembling finger in the direction. Gazing at me he opened his large frog-like mouth still wider, until I could see every one of his long fangs—it would be libelous to call them teeth—mossed over with green slimyness. His eyes rested upon me, and as I pointed with my finger, his gaze left my face, and passing like a current of electricity along

my quivering arm, arrived at my finger point and then seemed to pass instantaneously to the wood. Feeling infinitely relieved, when I, like a lightning-rod, had conducted off his gaze, I let fall my arm.

"Nothing discernible upon that portion of the visible horizon, sir," remarked Mr. Dowd, shutting his mouth with a snap and pursing out his lips in superfluous self-complacency.

"He is gone, *now.*"

"O, yes. I dare aver he has absented himself," replied Mr. Eliah Dowd, with sarcastic haughtiness. "Who indoctrinated you into the iniquitously debasing habit of uttering falsehoods, sir?" continued he with overpowering dignity.

"It is not a falsehood, sir—I *did* see a gentleman who spoke to me kindly, walked all through the woods with me, and when we parted gave me this pencil."

"Ah! a gentleman, eh?—and he gave you that pencil, did he—take care that you do not lie to me, sir, or I'll flog you well, if your father is the richest man in the county.—Let me see the bauble?"

"It belongs to me, sir, and I shall keep it," replied I firmly, well knowing that if I gave it to him he would perhaps detain it for weeks, and then probably give it to my father. Amazement gathered on the countenance of Eliah Dowd, as a thunder-cloud gathers over the sky of summer. Lightning gleamed in those piercing grey eyes—Mr. Dowd waxed exceedingly wroth and his voice was terrible.

"How dare you brave my authority, sirrah?" and he pulled me savagely by the ears. "How dare you insult me in *propria persona?*" and he twitched my hair ferociously. "I'll teach you, Master Trevor, to refuse my demands for that golden toy," and he knocked the pencil from my hand with his huge paw, and smiting me upon the cheek with terrific force, sent me sprawling on the floor after it.

Screaming wild and wailingly, the blood rushed to my face and

head, and a mighty sense of injustice and wrong seemed fiercely swelling within my heart. Running forward I grasped the pencil again, as it rolled before me, glittering in the light of a sunbeam which streamed through the window. I sprang to my feet and rushed in wild defiance towards the open door, through which the man had dragged me. The assembled scholars sat trembling upon their seats, and gathering their quivering limbs together as though they feared the next gust of passion would dash them from their places. Holding up their dog-eared books they appeared to be studiously conning their lessons, while their teeth chattered like castanets, and their eye-balls seemed about to start from their sockets with terror. I remembered all this afterwards, though at the time the scene was like characters written in sympathetic ink—memory, like the fire, afterwards brought it out distinctly.

"Back to your seat, sir, instantly," howled Mr. Eliah Dowd, as he planted himself, like Sin, before the gates of Pandemonium, to bar my escape. He seemed, to my boyish vision, to loom out more terribly even than the nameless Shape did to the Fallen archangel.

Turning, as soon as I saw that escape was cut off in that direction, with eyes flashing out all the burning hatred festering in my heart, I seized a heavy glass inkstand from a desk near at hand, and dashed it with frantic violence at my teacher's head.

It broke, and the ink streaming from his carroty locks, fell drippingly into his eyes. Blinded for a moment by the pitchy torrent, and stunned by the blow, he stood irresolute. 'Twas *but* a moment, however, and then he sprang like a wounded panther towards me. His eyes glared like those of a wild beast. I was desperate, the door was closed, the windows down, and escape seemed hopeless. Evading him by jumping aside, I escaped his grasp—leaped upon a desk and threw it over, so as to impede his way, and then with a spring of wild, despairing power, dashed, with a loud crash, through the window.

Uproar and disorder now reigned throughout the school. All

discipline was lost, and even the fear of the terrible teacher could not restrain the scholars or keep them in their seats.

I fell to the earth—for the distance was greater than I had supposed—stunned and bleeding, my flesh cut from the fragments of broken glass, and my limbs and head sore from contact with the window-sash. I have often looked at that place since, and think I must surely have been possessed of a devil, when I had the foolhardiness to leap through it. But, like the somnambulist walking upon the verge of a precipice, I did not know the danger I was in until it had passed. Recovering, however, in a moment, I leaped to my feet, My terrible pursuer was crashing at the door as I stood up and shook the glass from my clothes. There was prospect of a chase, for Mr. Eliah Dowd was a Yankee, and not to be discouraged by trifles.

I bounded over a fence near by, and with hair streaming wildly in the wind, ran swiftly across the fields towards Aspenwold. My pursuer, nothing deterred, leaped the fence also. The scholars all rushed to the door; girls and boys promiscuously mingled to gaze at the unusual and exciting spectacle.

I led the raging schoolmaster a long chase, and clearing another fence in my way, which enclosed a field filled with briars, was lost to his sight. Still undiscouraged he came bounding along, his huge feet kicking up a great dust and his eyes wildly rolling, like some of old Ossian's heroes. Fierce and terrible, O Eliah, was thy anger, and thy tracks past finding out.

Reaching the fence which enclosed the briar-field, in which he had seen me disappear so mysteriously, he sprang with dauntless agility upon the rails, but ah, sad to relate, just as he was leaping over, a treacherous rail swayed beneath the ponderous weight, and crackling—broke!

Mr. Eliah Dowd was precipitated headforemost into a ferocious-looking briar-bush, bristling with thorns like "quills upon a fretful porcupine." Whether he "scratched out both his eyes out," as the nursery-rhymes have it, I did not think it prudent to remain to

see; but shouting back deridingly, as the poor entrapped teacher floundered about like a fish in a net, and yelled in rage as the thorns pierced his flesh, I again began to run for fear he should escape and pursue me more fiercely than before. After going a very round-about way, I soon arrived within sight of the tall trees in the grounds of Aspenwold, and paused a moment to gasp for breath. My face was bruised and cut—my cap gone—my head swollen from the effects of the pedagogue's blows, and my clothes badly torn among the briars. Gasping with pain I passed the gate, but could scarcely mount the stone steps of the hall. I *did* mount them, nevertheless, but the effort exhausted my remaining strength. With a rush of blood to my head, and a gasp of suffocating pain I fell heavily upon the hall floor. I had swooned.

CHAPTER IX.

A LOW, confused murmur of voices whisperingly conversing—a dim, mellow-tinted twilight—and a faint fragrance of the perfume of flowers, seemed bathing me in its invisible, intoxicating essence. Languidly I opened my eyes.

Rich curtains, purpling in the dreamy autumnal twilight, and draped in luxurious tastefulness, depended from a small, elegantly-carved bedstead, upon which I lay. The walls of the room were covered with French paper of sunny, cheerful tints—nothing glaring, and no large, convulsive patterns, conceived in a designer's nightmare. Exquisite engravings, which my mother had brought from Scotland, hung in antique frames about the room. Small statuettes and casts were disposed in niches and corners, and books were scattered carelessly upon the tables. Late flowers in China vases stood in the windows. My eyes took in all this at a glance, as I slowly unclosed them. I seemed to awake from a dream, and to have slept long—very, very long.

Lying perfectly still, no one was aware that I had awakened. My eyelids seemed so heavy that I could scarce sustain the effort of keeping them open—an overpowering languor—a weary lassitude oppressed me like an opiate. But I did not sleep, and listened without an effort. My mother and youngest sister, Fanny, were conversing in a distant corner, near one of the windows.

"And is it really true, mother, that Mr. Eliah Dowd has left the state?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Papa should have had him arrested, for if poor Edgar should only die—"

"Hush, Fanny, do not speak so loud; the doctor said if he slept this afternoon and awoke about this time, all would be well."

"I wonder if he still sleeps, mamma—I'll see."

"Hist! Fanny, tread lightly and avoid startling him again into delirium."

"Yes, mother—how calmly he slumbers—only come and see!"

My sister leaned tenderly over me. I felt her warm breath upon my cheek. A stray ringlet touched my face, and slowly unclosing my eyes, I startled Fanny into an involuntary scream. My mother approached hastily.

"Fanny dear, what have you done?—Why, Edgar! my own darling boy, awake?—yes, indeed, awake, and *in every sense, too*,—God be praised!" And sinking upon her knees at the bedside with upraised hands turned pleadingly to heaven, my mother wept. But they were tears of joy and fervent gratitude. I smiled with my calm, languid eyes as my mother pressed her lips impulsively to mine—I smiled and was happy.

Fanny kissed me, too, and then ran off to tell the news that I was awake and well. Helen and Bel came into the room with her, and I was almost in danger of being smothered to death in kisses, after escaping from the fever—a more delicious death, surely, mortal could not wish.

A few moments afterwards my father entered the apartment, and pausing to look yearningly into my half closed eyes, dim with happy tears, bended over the bedside, and smoothing back my hair with his soft, cool hand, gently pressed his lips to my forehead. Ah, such happiness comes but rarely in this life, and then only like the noiseless tread of sunbeams, follows the paths of childhood!

"Do you feel very weak, Edgar?" said my mother, laying her soft hand tenderly upon my temples. I was far too weak and wearied to speak much, and so I only nodded my head, which felt so very light and dizzy.

"Poor little fellow," murmured my mother, plaintively.

"The savage brute! the base, ungrateful Yankee vagabond,"

murmured my father, hastily striding the floor. "To treat such a child in that manner—he richly deserves the stocks."

"But you gave him something as a memento of Kentucky—didn't you, papa?" said Fanny, laughing slily. All the others laughed too, and even my mother smiled demurely. I wanted to ask some questions about it—indeed about a great many things, but my mother smilingly shook her head and placed her finger upon her lip.

"Dr. Joliffe says Edgar must not talk any at present; it will injure you, my dear boy, and I know you will not disobey if *I* request you—will you?"

"No, mother," replied I faintly, closing my eyes, for the light began to affect them, and a vague, nameless feeling of slumberous pain seemed creeping through my temples.

"Edgar was always a dear, good little boy—thank God he is spared." A tear fell softly as a snow flake upon my forehead, but sweet maternal lips kissed it away. "Try and sleep now, my dear."

"Mr. Trevor, I will take the liberty of ordering you and the girls into the supper room—you disturb Edgar."

They left me laughing gaily. "Good bye, little Tom Thumb," cried Fanny. Opening my eyes, I attempted to smile, but made such a queer effort that they all laughed again good humoredly.

"It would take two such little fellows as you, Edgar, to make a respectable shadow," observed Helen, opening the door.

"Forward, march, all of you," exclaimed my mother, commandingly.

"Yes—we go—we go," and my sisters ran off with their father, he laughing as joyously as any of the party.

The door closed and the room was once more silent, disturbed only by the murmurous music of their laughter, which came rippling back in bubbling echoes.

My mother, with a book in her hand, sat down near the bedside to watch my slumbers. She did not speak again, for she doubtless supposed I was sleeping, as I lay quite still, with my eyes closed.

But although I tried to sleep I could not. My temples throbbed and burned painfully, and in attempting to recall the past I became lost in mazes of doubt and conjecture. Strange visions haunted me. Wonderful sensations thrilled through my veins. The bed seemed to be growing gradually larger under me—I could feel it: the room and every object in it slowly assumed gigantic proportions. My mother, I thought, had gone. Changes seemed occurring in my own frame. I was sensible of a gradual enlargement of my head, arms, legs, hands, and indeed in every feature and member of my body. I was swelling into the proportions of a Brobdignagian monster. I became afraid of myself. Struggling, I threw aloft my arms, and the room, bed, furniture—all vanished. Far away, amid an unknown sea, I was drifting upon a vast, glassy ocean of breathless calm. My body, light as a cork, floated listlessly upon this pellucid water, with my head pillowed upon my arm, and the cooling waves clasping my sides. The inhabitants of the great deep fled away at my approach, and solitary and alone, in the grandeur of my vast immensity, I drifted onwards. There was no sun, but one never-ending, purple twilight, heavy with perfume of flowers. Suddenly invisible, mighty powers, tumultuously upheaving beneath me, I was elevated mysteriously unto midair. Higher and higher I arose, and the atmosphere, fragrant with the breath of incense, saluted me with its voluptuous odors. Clouds, bright with the tints of undying sunset, surrounded me, and I seemed to float upon ether. Forms of undreamed-of loveliness, with faces whose angelic beauty mortal may not imagine, hovêred around and fanned me with wings radiant with the celestial sunlight of the city of God! My body was being borne on with the winged swiftness of a mighty wind, which ceased not, but rushed forever into vast chaotic darkness!

A moment—the scene changed—and the forms with wings of heavenly brightness vanished. Darkness encircled me, and lurid lightnings leaped amid the chaotic blackness of the firmament. Demons with wings like bats, flew howling from the impene-

trable gloom as I drifted, powerless, paralysed through the never-ending horrors. Chains clanking far beneath me, and the wild, appalling shrieks of tortured souls, sweltering amid the sulphury depths of the habitations of the damned, in worlds of outer darkness, pierced my ears.

Again—and all had passed. Slowly descending as though endowed with stupendous pinions, whose strokes kept time to strains of entrancing music, I sunk to a world fragrant with tropical odors and dazzling with brightness. My feet struck the earth and immediately I was a man, but a man of gigantic stature.

Every object in this country into which I had fallen was of an immensity of prodigiousness proportionate to my own. Seized with an inclination—which as I proceeded grew into a monomania—for walking, I moved forward, and not for an instant could I pause. With stupendous strides I plunged madly onwards. Palm-trees waving in the balmy air of the tropics, and the sun shining at high noon upon the broken and dishonored fragments of mighty temples, met me upon all sides. Tombs, gray with the dashings of unknown centuries of tempests, were mouldering in solitude. Basalisks basking in the sunshine, hid among the ruins, as I strided past, and snakes hanging in circling voluminous folds from overhanging trees, hissed in indolent languor as I rushed by them. A desolate awfulness brooded over the land—not a human being was to be seen. I reached the desert—I saw afar, looming from the glaring sands, cloud-piercing pyramids. An irresistible desire, which I could not combat, impelled me towards them, and I reached the base of the mightiest of them all. A cavity on the eastern side seemed to be intended as an entrance to the labyrinthian mysteries of the interior. Winged lions of granite, mouldering and gigantic, guarded the entrance. Pausing not a moment I rushed wildly into the interior, and walking, leaping and rushing by turns ceaselessly onwards, I lost myself amid the torturous windings of the pyramid. Stretching forth my hands I felt the granite walls that barred my advance. I shrieked with stentorian powerfulness—the stones,

mouldering in hieroglyphic mysteries, gave back my voice in funereal echoes. Dashing my head against a statue of the sacred Bramah, I shrieked and fell blindly into the folds of an enormous boa. I was being crushed in its voluminous, slimy coils—I felt my bones cracking and my breath came in gusts, as with loathsome kisses it beslimed my lips. Gasping and breathless I heard the stony immensity of the pyramid in reëchoing thunders crumbling around me. With one despairing, superhuman effort, I sprang from the embraces of the serpent, and shrieked aloud.

My eyes opened, and my mother, trembling in every nerve, and with terror stamped upon her countenance, clasped me to her breast.

"What! what is it, Edgar," gasped she falteringly. "What an unearthly shriek you uttered—I surely thought you were dying."

"Oh, I had such a horrible dream," said I, shuddering, and cowering still closer to her embrace, as the cold sweat—which seemed to me to be the drippings of the valley of the shadow of death—bedewed my forehead.

"Ah! the opium—the terrible opium—I beseeched the doctor not to administer it so frequently."

I sunk back upon the pillow almost breathless from exhaustion.

"The self-conceited quack," muttered my mother, her eyes flashing angrily. And she smoothed the pillow beneath my head.

"He shall not come near you again, Edgar, I'll nurse you myself. Any old woman would have known better than to give a child—a frail, delicate child, too—such a dose as that. It took you almost to death's door, my own bright boy. Rest your head upon my arm now, and try and sleep—I will guard you."

I slept, and when I again awoke the fever and the pains of the head had left me. For long weeks I lingered in helpless weakness, while the dreary, protracted winter came on apace with its winds and snows. Not until the fresh, invigorating breezes of spring blew once more over the awakening earth, did I regain my former boyish robustness and health.

CHAPTER X.

Scene, the breakfast room at Aspenwold. Curtains of embroidered white muslin and of light purple stuff, drape two large windows looking out upon a fine landscape, stretching for several miles distant, and diversified with field and stream, and ancient woodland. The walls of the room are covered with paper of a bright, delicate lilac tint, and the furniture is of carved walnut wood. There is no glaring light, for although the windows are open, a clump of dark foliaged elm trees casts a shadow upon the room. My mother sits at the head of the table, facing the two windows. Habited in a dark, rich dress—for the spring mornings are still cool—with a small white collar fitting closely about her neck, and contrasting finely with the high necked robe, my mother had never looked more regally beautiful. She had taken scarcely anything for breakfast, and sat at the head of the table absently toying with her spoon. My father was sipping his coffee as though he did not particularly relish it, but merely took it from habit. All my sisters were present. Helen sitting upon one side, with Bel, while Fanny and I occupied the other. Our mother was evidently angry at something, that was clearly discernible, but what it was we did not know, at least, I did not. She was restless and agitated, and appeared to be trying to suppress her emotion. At length she spoke.

"When will you see this man, Mr. Trevor?"

"Who, my dear?"

(My mother scornfully,) "Who? I should think you would remember him."

"Johnson, do you mean?"

She inclined her head affirmatively.

"To-day, perhaps. I have an engagement to meet him, but he is not very punctual."

"And can nothing be done to prevent this sale?"

My father, speaking rather indifferently, and balancing his spoon upon the edge of his cup, "nothing, I'm afraid."

"You take it very coolly indeed, sir; you let nothing affect your digestion. If I were a man, and in your situation, I would not sit there trifling with a spoon, and say so coolly and indifferently, 'nothing, I'm afraid.' I would be up and stirring. Experience, says the old adage, teaches fools, but you are surely past teaching. If this was the first time you had been compelled to lose your property and sell your home, by endorsing for a brother free mason, I could look over it, and forgive you; but it is not."

"Madelaine, you promised never to allude to this subject again."

"Do not speak to me of promises, sir, you who outrage the most sacred pledges that man can make."

"Madelaine! Madelaine! I am surprised at you."

"You may well be amazed. I am not in the habit of giving way to bursts of passion, but there are some things that no woman of spirit can bear unmoved."

'Do not speak of this before the children, I beg of you. Regard my feelings."

(My mother with withering scorn and contempt.) "Regard *your* feelings. Yes, I will, Sir Trevor, when you learn to regard the feelings, the comforts, the life long happiness, perhaps, of others. Look at these daughters just upon the threshold of womanhood. Who is to educate and fit them for the stations in life to which they were born? Who is to surround them with the refinements and luxuries to which they have been accustomed? And our son, to whom I fondly hoped to give the best education the eastern colleges could afford—to accomplish by travel and study in Europe—to send back to the land of his noble ancestors. All, all these cherished schemes have vanished, and we are left homeless and beggared."

" Say no more, dear mamma," urged Helen entreatingly, we can work, we can earn a living in some honest way, do not overwhelm poor papa."

" Can work ! The descendants of Lord Balcour earn a living by the work of their hands ! Oh, that I had never left Scotland to be decoyed to this half civilized country, to pine in poverty. Why did you send for me to bring me to this, Trevor ? I came to you after long persuasion, and with forebodings, and what did I find upon my arrival ? *You*, living in a half built shell of a house and surrounded by barns and pig styes. The place was repaired and beautified by my taste, the grounds cleared and laid out by my directions, the gardens planted under my superintendence, and flowers that you had allowed the weeds to overgrow, bloomed around us. Roses shed their leaves and their fragrance, and like a dream of beauty Aspenwold appeared before you. But no happiness could you find in its blossoming gardens, its shady groves, and winding, terraced walks, echoing with the joyous laughter of your children. All must be forsaken to join these accursed free masons. Your wealth must be lavished to build up a lodge and support a set of the most worthless vagabonds in the country—too lazy to work and too cowardly to steal—your evenings spent often till after midnight in their infernal orgies, and this is the end of it. Careless, confiding Trevor, 'good clever fellow,' endorses for a masonic brother—not a greater scoundrel in the country—and loses his home and fortune."

" Oh, Madelaine, forbear ! I cannot endure this."

" Risks the happiness of his wife and children to favor a specu lator and gambler. But all these are nothing compared to the baby-apron honors of free masonry, and the sacred obligations of the brotherhood."

My father made no reply, but arose and left the room, seemingly crushed with these cruel words, and bowed down with his misfortune. We all moved from the table as he rose, for the scene was becoming exceedingly embarrassing. We did not wish to hear these

upbraidings from our mother, but then it could not be avoided. To have left the room she would have considered a personal insult, for she evidently wished us to hear all that she had said. It was very painful to sit and see our parent suffer, for however he might have deserved censure for his conduct, we felt the impropriety of this public scene. With all his faults we loved him. I moved and turned restlessly upon my chair, and my face underwent all kinds of changes. How my sisters looked and acted I do not know, for I could not raise my eyes. The servants, fortunately, had left the room before my mother had commenced.

As my father walked away, my mother rose, and dashing the tears from her eyes, gathered the folds of her dark, rich dress about her with her jewelled fingers, and swept proudly out of the apartment.

Helen had thrown herself upon the sofa and covered her face with her hands. She seemed weeping bitterly. Bel was sobbing at the window, and Fanny and I sat looking in a sad, bewildered manner into each others eyes.

" Helen, you ought to go to papa and see what he is doing."

" I ought, indeed, dear Edgar," answered my sister in a voice which she strove to render firm and composed, " I will go.

Presently she returned and told us that she found our father in the library, with his head bowed upon the table, and his hands clenched firmly, but in deep silence. She approached and laid her hand upon his shoulder. He looked up, and his face was care-worn and haggard, as though deep sorrow had fallen upon him, and suffering too great for tears.

" Is it you, Helen, my own sweet child?" and as he spoke his voice trembled with sadness unutterable. " Did none think of me but you? Ah! can you ever forgive me for bringing you to this, my queenly Helen, my own lovely daughter?"

" Forgive you! O, dear papa, do not, do not speak so," and she flung herself upon his neck, and kissed his pale, cold forehead, again and again.

" Do not give way to despondency, dear father, all will be well. What though wealth passes from us, we may yet have a competence, we may yet be happy."

"I hope so, my dear child. I trust in God it may be so—but your mother, your mother, Helen. O, those cruel, cruel words, they pierced to my heart like barbed arrows, and still quiver in my bosom."

" She will retract them, dear, dear papa. They were uttered in anger, and when in calmness she thinks them over, her noble spirit will ask your forgiveness, and all will be happiness again."

" But they were true, too true, my Helen. I felt them to be so and could not reply. Leave me now, my daughter, but do not abhor me."

" No, never, my dear father. I love you more than before." She turned lingeringly to leave the room—her hand touched the door.

" And Edgar, and Bel, and Fanny," said my father, falteringly, do they——"

" Still love and esteem you as ever," replied Helen, divining his meaning before he expressed it.

" I am satisfied, but—but—Madelaine ?"

" Will forgive you all, and forget the past."

The door closed upon Helen's withdrawing footsteps, and my father was alone.

CHAPTER XI.

My sister came in and told us all this. I had been sitting at the window, looking out upon the far stretching landscape, and sadly thinking of the time when all would pass away as a dream of the night, and we should leave Aspenwold never to return.

Felix, our mulatto boy, had led my pony—a jet black Canadian with long, sweeping tail and mane—into the lawn, and was holding him with a halter, while he cropped the sweet green grass, and at the same time making droll, enticing gestures and faces to me. He wondered, doubtless, why I did not laugh at them, for he had never failed to provoke my merriment upon other occasions. But he saw not the veil which enshrouded me, he pierced not the dark cloud of my thoughts. He was hurt because I did not notice him, and slowly led the pony away, not in sullenness or anger, but sorrowfully, with his large dark eyes turned wonderingly and speakingly to mine.

We had all gathered around Helen as she entered, and stood listening eagerly to her soft, musical voice. When she had concluded, I stole silently away. Mounting the richly carpeted staircase, I stepped lightly along the corridor, and paused silently at the door of my mother's bed room. All was still and silent as though no one occupied it. Raising my hand, I was about to tap upon the door, but my courage failed me, and my arm fell passively. Listening again, I could hear nothing but the audible pulsing of my heart, and the twittering songs of the early birds.

I knocked, and a voice said calmly, "enter." Opening the door gently, I saw my mother sitting at the window which commanded

a view of the village. She had looped the curtain aside, and sat with a half opened book in her hand, gazing vaguely out upon the clouds wildly rolling in the vast blue silences of the upper sky. Her eyes were dry and tearless, and the book lay still in her motionless fingers. The room felt cold and cheerless, for there was no fire upon the empty hearthstone, and no traces of recent occupancy.

"Mamma," murmured I tenderly, as she sat so calm and silently without turning her head as I entered.

"Ah, is it you, Edgar?"

I crept gently towards her, and sinking upon my knees, laid my head upon her lap. Just then the sun, hitherto shrouded in clinging cloudy cerements, burst forth, and dashing the glory of his radiance upon the earth, all nature smiled.

"Welcome! welcome! my own dear boy, happy omens accompany you," murmured my mother, showering her kisses upon me. And tears, sweet gifts of the angels to woman, descended like the dews of the morning from my mother's surcharged heart, as she clasped me passionately to her bosom. The sun streamed radiantly down upon the white cottages of the distant village, and over the furrowed fields, and the far away forests, and upon the humble spire of the village church, which gleamed like molten gold.

"How bright the church spire grows, mamma."

"It points the road to heaven, my boy, that calm holy place which we dream of in our childhood, but the older we become, the farther we grow away from it." There was a silence.

"Mother," said I, looking up timidly at the sweet blue eyes beaming upon me, "may I ask a favor?"

"Surely, my Edgar, speak."

Approaching my lips closely to my mother's ear, bent listeningly towards me, I whispered. A quick, passionate gesture interrupted me, then calmness succeeded, and we looked into each others eyes. For a moment neither of us spoke.

"Yes, you are right, my Edgar, it shall be done."

" Now, mamma ?"

" This very moment—come."

She took my hand, and rising, we, left the room.

Along the dim corridor, and to the head of the staircase, my mother paused and fixed her eyes upon the floor, in deep thought. Then her neck rose proudly as a swan's from the troubled waters, and with the rich folds of her dark dress trailing behind upon the steps, we glided noiselessly down to the hall, and approached the library.

A momentary hesitancy occurred, a shrinking, womanly embarrassment, then a jewelled finger timidly upraised, tapped faintly upon the door.

" Come in," said a voice, lowly.

We entered. My father turning his head, looked full upon us. His eyes sad and heavy, lighted up with a sudden joyousness as he met my mother's glance.

" I have wronged you, my husband, I come——"

" To restore me to happiness," interrupted my father, eagerly advancing. My mother's head sunk upon his heart—that great expansive heart which vibrated to every noble emotion, as the strings of the wind-harp tremble to the pulsing of the breezes. There were sobbings and tears—the scene was holy, and the rustling of the plumed wings of listening angels, seemed audible to my ears. Noiselessly withdrawing, I closed the door after me, and with my heart tremulous with happiness, ran through the hall and reached the piazza.

Felix and the pony were before me. " Saddle him quickly, Felix," said I dancing upon the piazza as the mulatto proceeded to obey my order. " What in de worl' is de matter, massa Edgar ?" asked the boy looking up wonderingly. " Why, ye's dancin' a hoe-down as good as any corn-field niggar I ever seed in all my born days. Git up here, Puck, and come and git yer saddle on hoss fly." Stopping to look back as he reached the corner, " Well,

if ever I seed the beat o' this, massa Edgar's sartainly got the leerium simons,* ha! ha! ha!"

"Go on and saddle Puck, you yellow monkey."

"O yes, O yes, I'm gwine, gwine, gone," and Felix ran off laughing boisterously.

He soon returned leading the pony, prancing haughtily in his rich housings.

"The young rascal's gettin' as proud as a nigger with a big ginger cake, massa Edgar."

"It is a long time since I have ridden him, Felix."

"Why, the black scamp tramped on my heel as I was a leadin' him along, and then arter that what you 'spose he did?"

"What? what did you do, Puck," and I patted his neck, caressingly, and sprang lightly to the saddle.

"Snickered and laughed like he'd done somethin' cute," replied Felix, fixing my foot in the stirrup. "Better watch him, massa Edgar, I tell ye he's cunnin' as a 'possum."

Gathering up the reins, I gave Puck a touch in the flank and off he bounded, his small hoofs stamping the ground as though he spurned it.

"Take care yerself, massa Edgar," cried Felix, as I clattered swiftly down the winding avenue.

"Aye, aye, Felix," and before the echo of my voice died away in the woods, I had dashed up to the gothic iron gates which opened upon the turnpike.

"Halloa! aunt Dinah."

"Comin', comin," and out hobbled the ancient dame with a crutch under one arm, and a broken pipe held in her toothless mouth. "De Lord save us! why bless yer life, chile, is dat you?"

I assured aunt Dinah that it certainly was.

"And is ye got well?"

"Perfectly."

"No ye aint nuther, yer as white as a sheet. Better look out, de blessed angels be arter ye yet."

*Delirium tremens.

"I will, aunt Dinah, good bye."

"Good bye, chile, and de Lord bless ye—yer ma and the young ladies all well?"

"Quite well, how are you getting?"

"Not much better, honey, pretty nigh to kingdom come."

The gate was open by this time, and Puck rushed impetuously through it. There had been a slight shower the night previous, which had settled the dust, and the atmosphere was delicious with balmy freshness. Expanding my lungs, I drank in great volumes of air, as I galloped wildly onwards. How every nerve, every sense, thrilled to the exquisite pulsation of that mysterious invisible essence which we call—pleasure.

And on dashed Puck away! away! fences and fields glided past as faces in our dreams. Aspenwold, with its trees and shrubbery, was soon far behind, and the distant houses of the neighboring village were drawing near.

I had started out for a ride without any definite idea of where I was to stop. Now at sight of the village, the thought occurred to me to ride into the little place, and call at the post office—not that I expected any letters, but then I thought there might be some for my parents, as it had been quite a long time since they had received any from Scotland. So I turned Puck's head in the right direction, and was soon ambling leisurely down the straggling and only street.

Reaching the door of the post office, I dismounted. The postmaster shuffled over the heap of greasy looking packages, and extended one to me.

"Postage paid?"

"Yes, don't ye see its from furrin' parts."

"Ah!" I exclaimed, putting it carefully into my pocket.

CHAPTER XII.

Turning carelessly upon my heel, I was about leaving the office, when a bill, printed in large capitals, attracted my attention. "Sheriff's Sale!! will be sold on the ensuing 10th of May, the farm and elegant mansion-house known as 'Aspenwold,' belonging to Edgar Trevor, Esq., together with the farming utensils, cattle, hogs, negroes, and other chattels, &c., &c.," and the bill went on to particularize the items. I had seen enough, however, and walking out hastily—for there were several rude, vulgar fellows present—so that no one could perceive my emotion, I mounted my horse and rode sadly up the street. I felt hurt, my pride was wounded.

Rebellious, wicked thoughts, concerning my father, even mingled vaguely with my musings, for I had never before considered the sale as absolutely certain, still fondly hoping—I scarcely knew why—that something would occur to postpone it or render it unnecessary. But this cold, unfeeling bill, staring me in the face with its huge capitals, effectually removed all doubts

When I had passed the outskirts of the village, and no one was within sight, I drew forth the letter, fondly hoping that its contents might possibly have some influence upon our misfortunes. The envelope was small and white—the handwriting delicately feminine. The seal was of dark crimson wax, stamped with a shield, without supporters, surmounted by a baronial coronet, and the address was my mother's.

Puck leisurely trotted along, with the reins hanging loosely upon his neck, as buried in troubled and mournful reflections I approached the gothic gateway of our dear Aspenwold, now seeming doubly dear, that we were so soon to leave it. I rode slowly up

the winding avenue, passed the small, exquisitely beautiful lakelet—upon the smooth waters of which danced, to the wayward breezes, a painted pleasure-boat—and dismounted at the front portico. Everything, to my eyes, now, wore a look of gloomy funereal sadness. I remembered the time when I had gaily assisted my mother to plant turf and wild flowers upon the banks of the little lake—to indent its shores and give them a wild, natural appearance. And well had we succeeded, for no one could now tell but what nature, in some fanciful freak, had scooped out the irregular, oblong basin and then poured a cloud full of water into it.

Calling Felix, who was not far off, I threw the reins to him without speaking, and hurriedly entered the library. My parents were seated opposite to each other, near the large, arched window, earnestly conversing. They had not heard me open the door and enter, so absorbed were they in the subject, and not until I had arrived nearly opposite to them, did my presence interrupt the conversation.

" A letter for you, mamma," and I extended it to her.

Observing the seal and the foreign post-mark, she received it eagerly, and breaking it open, commenced reading.

" Who from, my dear?"

" From our friend, Lady Mildred," answered my mother, without raising her eyes. " Listen to what she tells me, ' Your quondam friend and admirer, Sir Charles Crawford, has, I learn, embarked for the United States, and purposes making a tour of the western portion of the Union. I dare say, my dear Madelaine, he will favor you with a call, as I understand he learned your address before leaving."

" Sir Charles Crawford?" repeated my father inquiringly, as though striving to recall the person bearing the name. " Ah! yes, I remember now," and he laughed rather contemptuously.

My mother placed her finger upon her lip, shaking her head slightly as she glanced towards me. I understood the gesture, though it was intended for my father.

She then commenced to read again, smiling several times at the

contents of the letter, and arriving at the conclusion, looked up pleasantly to me. "Lady Mildred sends her love and a kiss to my Edgar." And she drew me gently to her side and pressed her soft lips to my forehead.

The letter was folded and put away, and I learned nothing more.

"You can read it some other time, Mr. Trevor," added my mother, apologetically.

"Any time will do, Madelaine." And there was a momentary pause.

"To resume the subject we were speaking of," commenced my mother, "Is it absolutely necessary that they should all be sold? Can it not be evaded—pray tell me—tell me all. Let me know the worst."

"Aunt Kitty may be retained, as she is so old—"

"She must be," responded my mother.

"I intend that she shall, my dear."

"And Felix, and Lulu, the girls' waiting-maid, what of them?"

My father appeared somewhat embarrassed at this question and looked down upon the carpet.

"I fear they will have to go, Madelaine—I have done everything in my power to prevent their sale, but—"

He stopped abruptly A small hand-bell stood upon the table. My mother arose, and grasping it, rung a sharp, nervous peal, and then composedly returned to her seat. My father and I looked inquiringly towards her, but neither of us spoke.

"It is wrong to sell human beings, Trevor, the laws of both God and man forbid it.—'Tis shocking—terrible."

"But necessity compels me to it."

"You should never have bought them. I objected to it from the first."

"Remember the peculiar circumstances, Madelaine. They would have been sold to harsh and cruel masters—petty, ignorant tyrants, who would have separated the mother from her child, the husband from the wife, and sold them all again to the next speculator. 'Twas charity to buy them, for we gave them a home."

But to deprive them of it, after tasting its joys—you should have given them their liberty," said my mother.

"That was impossible, my dear, utterly impossible—you know what my circumstances were at that time?"

"Think you not there is a God above, Trevor, who sees all things? Do you not believe He would have made up the paltry sum by an increase of your fields, or a more abundant harvest?"

"Madelaine, you will always quarrel and find fault with me," said my father, rising and walking back and forth in the room.

The door opened and Felix appeared, cap in hand.

"Did you ring for me, Missus?"

"Yes—go saddle my horse as quickly as possible." The boy withdrew.

"No, Mr. Trevor, I do not *quarrel* and find fault with you," and my mother's voice grew sad and tremulous, "but it wounds me to the heart to see these things, and know that I cannot prevent them. Forgive my seeming harshness of manner, it is not *you* that irritate me, but the subject."

I could scarcely forbear smiling at my mother's distinction.

The apology apparently soothed my father, who ceased to walk the apartment, and again took his seat. He gazed listlessly through the window for some time, and then suddenly turned his head.

"Where are you going, Madelaine, that you have ordered your horse?"

"To see Johnson."

"It isn't worth while, my dear, he cannot influence the sale either way. It is—"

My father's voice faltered slightly.

"A Sheriff's sale, mamma," whispered I, relieving him, "the bills are posted in the village."

I had expected that this would startle her and produce almost another scene. But she did not start, or change color, nor appear at all astonished. Cold composure enveloped her as a mantle.

"The hoss is waitin', Missus," said Felix, deferentially entering.

"I shall not need him now, Felix," and my mother's voice was like a torrent in winter, outwardly calm and frozen, but with an under-current of suppressed, tumultuous emotion. "Take him back to the stables," and she waved him away with her hand.

"Madelaine, do not look upon me with that cold, unearthly stare. Oh! do not torture me. Speak! speak! upbraid me, abuse me, curse me, but oh!—" and he passionately covered his face with his hands.

"My husband, my dear Trevor, we will speak no more of this subject; what cannot be avoided must be endured heroically. Had you made me a confidante of your business secrets these things might never have befallen us."

"Would to God that I had, for then I would not have borne them alone."

"You shall not bear them alone, my noble Trevor; this fond, womanly heart, that has thrilled to the overflowings of your love, shall still cherish a place for the tears of your sorrow. When, O, when will men cease to regard woman but as the painted plaything of the parlor, to whom their business cares and troubles can be of no interest, and from whom they may expect no sympathy or advice!"

"Do not wrong me, my dear Madelaine, I appreciated and acknowledged your powers, but I knew your prejudice against this friend of mine, and I feared to ask your advice."

"May it not be different in the future, my Trevor? will you fear to trust me again? Woman's true instincts never deceive her, and—pardon me for saying—they are far more acute than man's."

I feared that my presence was an intrusion, and noiselessly approaching the door, opened it and left the library.

CHAPTER XIII.

MARCH, with its wintry winds, had passed over us, and April heralded by the noiseless tread of sunbeams, and the dashing, avant couriers of glittering showers, now ruled the earth.

'Twas evening. The round, red moon uprose from behind piled rugged masses of dark Alpine clouds. Pleasant was the breath of the evening breeze as it dallied coyly amid the tree tops, and wantoned on the early green turf. I had been standing upon the steps of the piazza for some length of time, listening attentively. I had heard Felix enter the supper room. Now he was opening the door to come out into the hall.

" Felix," called I in a low, distinct tone.

There was no lamp in the hall, but I could hear footsteps approaching. The sounds came like faint echoes. Upon the door step Felix stopped, and looked peeringly around. 'Twas a dim twilight, for the moon was still struggling with the clouds, like a noble vessel amidst hungry waves—and I called his name again—" Felix."

" Why, is it you, massa Edgar? I was wunderin' who it could be whisperin' to me."

" Is your work all done, Felix?"

" Yes, siree, every bit of it."

" Come with me then, I have something important to tell you." The boy looked excited at this, and leaping down the steps, followed me. " How old are you?" said I abruptly, halting upon the turfy margin of the little lake, translucently gleaming in the moonbeams.

" Don't you hear me?—how old are you?"

He stood absently looking down into the water.

"Sartainly I hears ye, massa Edgar, but I was jest tryin' to 'member how old I is." His fingers sought his head instinctively, and he scratched it slowly—"when next fourth o' July comes, I'll be eighteen."

Looking inquisitively around, I did not immediately reply to the remark. He observed my glance.

"Looking for the boat?" said he.

"Yes, where is it?"

"Do ye see that big black shadow yonder?" and he pointed with his finger to the place. "It's up there."

"Will you bring it to me, Felix?" He went with alacrity, and arriving at the boat, sprung lightly into it, grasped the two oars, and rowed towards me. I leaped in, and sat silently down upon the seat in the stern.

"Please row out from the shore, Felix."

"Yes, sir."

"That will do, no one can hear us now, I think."

"No danger o' that, massa Edgar."

Dark shadows lay along the green margin, and upon the lower portion of the water. The spot where we were floating, the clear moonbeams rendered almost as bright as day. My companion ceased rowing, as I spoke, and turning towards me, his dark oriental eyes flashed wonderingly into mine. I experienced a slight embarrassment, for I did not exactly know how to broach the subject.

"Felix," commenced I, looking evasively into the water, and playing with one of the oars, "how would you like to be sold away from here?" He started, and I could feel the light boat rock tremblingly. The dark eyes distended in terror, and as the moon, battling with the clouds, dashed a fullness of light upon his countenance, it seemed to change from its usual olive hue, and become fearfully pale.

"O no, massa Edgar, ye jest foolin' me. I ain't done nothin' bad," and he made an effort to laugh unconcernedly.

But observing that I still looked troubled and thoughtful, he asked, "What mas'r goin' to sell me fur?"

"It is not your master, Felix, but a terrible officer they call the sheriff, that is going to sell all the black people."

"And will we all have to go down the river?" asked the mulatto in a tone of shrinking dread.

"If the negro traders buy you—yes."

"Ders a nigger buyer in town now, massa Edgar—Col. Aders. Tom told me so to-day, and he's got a great big chist o' hand cuffs and chains, to put on de niggers he buys, to keep em frum runnin' off." I looked up with a glance of sympathy. "He has, massa Edgar, coz I seed him tother day myself. Got a great shaggy head, and looks like a dog that 'ad been caught stealin' sheep—ugh." And he shuddered and drew his limbs together, as though he already felt the cold, clasping links upon him.

"What if you should run off," suggested I, looking around me cautiously. "They could'nt sell you then."

He flashed upon me such a look of amazement, that I could not restrain a smile.

"You seem to think that nearly as bad as being sold down the river."

"If they was to ketch me an' bring me back, I'd be sartain to go then. De nigger buyers be right arter Felix, coz nobody else would have him."

"But you need not be brought back, Felix, if you manage it rightly." 'Tisn't very far to the Ohio river, and when you once pass that you are safe—they'll not follow you then."*

"Oh, but"—and Felix stopped and looked puzzled, and strangely perplexed.

"But what?"

"I—I don't believe I'm smart enough to run off, massa Edgar."

I laughed deridingly. "Tame, spiritless fool, you deserve to be a slave, when you are too much of a coward to strike for your liberty."

* There was no Fugitive Slave Law at that time.

"I wasn't raised like you, massa Edgar," answered the boy in a deprecating tone. "I never had no edication, and how could I know anything about liberty and book larnin'?"

"That is all too true, Felix, and I'm sorry to say it; but even wild beasts have what is called an instinct for liberty."

I arose and stood up proudly in the boat, with my chest heaving and my eyes flashing. How vastly superior I felt to the grovelling being at my feet. And yet, in God's eye, we were both alike—our souls equally valuable.

"But wild beasts don't have to work," said the mulatto, raising his eyes pityingly to mine. "What does colts and oxen, arter they's broke, know about liberty?"

"Felix, I'm ashamed of you. You have nursed me ever since I was a little weak fellow—have played with me many a long summer day, (a low sob interrupted me)—have carried me upon your shoulders, and gathered wild mulberries to give all the ripest and best of them to me, and I love you dearly, and will assist you to run away rather than let that hang-dog looking fellow get you."

"How, massa Edgar? only tell me how."

"Listen!" and I elevated my arm with a gesture commanding attention. "Papa has several horses in the stable—we will on to-morrow night, or as soon as we can get an opportunity, select two of the best among them. There is a good turnpike to Maysville, and I will give out as we pass along that you are my servant, sent to take care of me, and that I am going to meet my mother at the river. At Maysville there is a ferry across to a little town in Ohio, and I will take you over when we get there."

"But how'll we get the hosses, massa Edgar? your pa won't let us have 'em."

"O, you blockhead, can't we take them and start at night? We would not be disobeying any of papa's orders, for there would be none. Once on the way, we would gallop wildly along the road night and day, until safely at the river. I would like to see any one catch us then."

The little boat had drifted from the middle of the lake, and as there was a large spring at one extremity, and consequently a current, had floated slowly towards the shore, without either of us perceiving it.

Felix still looked undecided. I could not rouse him to any enthusiasm. "Will you accept, Felix?—yes or no—liberty or drudgery and slavery?"

I sprang into the seat by the oars, I grasped them, and leaned breathlessly forward.

In the enthusiasm of the moment I had elevated my voice, and spoke the last sentence in quite a grand, theatrical manner.

A low, crackling sound among the dead branches, behind the evergreens, startled me. A light, chuckling laugh made me tremble with terror. I threw my whole strength upon the oars, and as the boat was light, it shot like an arrow across the clear, rippling water, towards the opposite side. Another pull, and we grated upon the shore. Neither of us had spoken. Now we gazed fearfully at each other, to see if we were really scared, and then satisfied that we certainly were, looked in the direction of the tangled masses of evergreens.

"Hush, Felix, I hear footsteps." Listening breathlessly, we could hear the sound fitfully dying away.

Assured that no one was coming after us, I dropped the oars, and telling my companion to be careful and fasten the boat, walked swiftly, very swiftly in the direction of the house. Looking behind me, when I had reached the piazza, I perceived Felix not three yards distant. I was very much frightened, naturally supposing the person—if human being it was—must have heard our whole conversation. If so, the consequences might prove very serious to me, Felix, and even to my father.

After becoming somewhat more composed, I began to reflect, and it seemed to me I had heard that strange, disagreeable laugh—if laugh it could be called—somewhere, or at some time before. Where or when I could not then remember. I did not tell my

mother nor any of my sisters about this adventure, and exhorting Felix, as he valued his life and my safety, to say not a word about it, (a promise which he very readily gave,) we separated. I lay long awake that night, planning all kinds of strange schemes, but finally fell asleep, for boys cannot remain sleepless even when burdened with momentous subjects.

Nothing more was ever said about the plan of escape which I had contrived for Felix, for we were both afraid to attempt to put it into execution, and so night after night came and passed, but yet the horses fed quietly in their stalls. The mulatto appeared to go about his usual routine of duties with as much indifference and unconcern as though the future had no dark clouds in store for him—as though change could never come.

CHAPTER XIV.

The morning of the tenth of May dawned clear and cloudless. The night before had been oppressively warm, and I had left the windows of my room open. About four o'clock I started, and suddenly awoke from vague, troubled dreamings. Faint, yellow rays of light were glancing up like spears in the eastern horizon, signaling the approach of the sun. The pale, crescent moon, dimly faded away into the spotless azure, and the stars vanished one by one. Sweet perfumes of roses, tremulous with clustering night dews, floated like clouds of incense through the open windows. All nature seemed entombed in sleep, and even the birds were still and songless. Occasionally the faint lowing of cattle or the distant crow of the neighboring cock, disturbed the dreamy morning silence. Listening attentively, I thought I heard movements in the house as of some one walking about. I could not believe that it was either of my parents, for they never arose at such an early hour.

That overpowering languor and sleepiness affected me, which most persons experience in sultry, summer mornings, and I could not compel my will to rise. The hall clock striking four had awakened me, and I could still hear the muffled sound of the swaying pendulum dividing the silence. Then it ceased to affect me, and I heard low, smothered sobs, and unrestrained weepings of voiceless sorrow. These noises grew fainter and fainter, and finally died away, as I turned restless upon the downy pillows and fell asleep. I must have slumbered a long time—for it could not be called sleep—which was haunted by pale, flitting spectres and demoniac slave drivers trailing unending chains, and pursuing me with

iron fetters; a tear fell silently upon my temples, and I started and looked up into my mother's face. The now risen sun was flooding the room with light, and the birds sang joyously in the trees.

"It is time to dress, Edgar," said my mother sadly, "the sale takes place to-day, and we will breakfast earlier than usual on that account."

"Yes, mamma." She dropped the curtains over the windows and left the room, but her voice still lingered and saddened me strangely.

Breakfast passed in almost total silence. My mother ate nothing, and sat looking absently through the windows, as though in a mournful trance. The furniture and all the arrangements of the house remained as they had always been, as possession was not to be given for three or four months. Only the dwelling and farm, farming utensils and negroes were to be disposed of. The furniture was not to be sold at all.

The morning passed, we scarcely knew how, and ten o'clock—the hour fixed for the commencement of the sale—drew near. By this time we could see a great many persons ride up, and fastening their horses to the overhanging boughs of the trees, saunter inquisitively about the place.

Slowly the crowd began to increase, and presently the auctioneer—a rather coarse, vulgar looking person—arrived upon the ground. My father had been nervously walking about the garden, then the piazza, the lawn, and finally sat down in front of the house upon a large stone which was used as a mounting place to get upon horses. Quite a number of the neighboring farmers came up to him, and shaking him cordially by the hand, appeared to sympathize in his troubles. The greater portion of them, however, strolled impudently about, tapping upon the shutters to see if the weather had affected the wood-work, and peering impertinently into the hall. Some of the more forward ones wished to examine the rooms and the arrangements of the house; but my mother, who was passing through the hall, as she heard this request, haughtily ordered the persons away. They turned sullenly and walked off. Some

stalked across the flower-beds, crushing the delicate plants beneath their rude tread, and others again plucking the rarest and most beautiful flowers, and after toying childishly with them tore the leaves in pieces and flung them aside. Four or five rude country boys, jumped into the little painted skiff upon the lake, and commenced rowing and pushing about in all directions, striking at the fish in the clear, transparent water, and shouting at each other discordantly. Suddenly, one of them snapping an oar, careened the boat to one side, and they all tumbled out. I was standing in the balcony, at the front of the house, with my sister Fanny, commanding a view of the whole scene, and I must confess I was heartily glad to see them fall into the water, which, fortunately for them, was very shallow at the place.

The auctioneer had succeeded in finding an empty barrel, and placing it near the front of the house, immediately under the balcony, jumped up upon it, rung a hand-bell which he held, and called out in his loud, brassy voice, "O, yez! O, yez!"

The crowd all gathered about him, and the sale commenced. My mother and two eldest sisters were in my room, which was in the front of the house, and sat at the windows gazing down with mournful interest upon the spectacle.

The farming utensils were first offered, and quickly sold at good prices; then cattle, horses and a great many other articles, and at length the man informed the now largely-increased crowd, in his blandest tones, that he would sell, to the highest bidder, "a number of very likely negroes."

This announcement seemed to arouse the interest of all present, and old farmers, with coarse features and unshaven faces, familiarly nudged their neighbors in the ribs with the butts of their riding-whips, and stretched their necks with animation.

My mother arose and came out upon the balcony, where Fanny and I were standing, and Helen and Bel soon followed.

"Hello! you yaller feller there, come up here, we'll try you fust," called the auctioneer to Felix, who stood among the other

negroes about the piazza steps. Some sat in groups, sobbing and moaning piteously, others gazed on the crowd with the utmost indifference, and again some with sullen, frowning faces, returned the look of the rude gazers about them, as though they would have resisted the tyranny if hope had not utterly left them. My mother's countenance became fixed and harsh, and her lips compressed in anger. Felix came sullenly forward as all eyes centered upon him.

"Git up on that hoss-block, my buck, and don't look so grum."

The boy tottered up the two or three steps and stood shrinkingly upon the block, cowering beneath the peering, inquisitive glances of the crowd of upturned faces.

"How much is bid for him, feller citizens? How much?"

"Hold up your head, my buck," and the auctioneer extended the end of his cane, and placing it under the boy's chin, raised his head. "Now look out bold, like a lion, and tell us how old ye ar. O, git out, don't be crying and snufflin' thar, like a gal. Be a man, and tell this large and respectable audience how old ye ar. Eighteen, eh? Well, my friends, what's bid for him? How much am I offered to start him—how much? What! nobody wants this fine, likely nigger. Why, feller citizens, I'm perfectly astonished, that in this inlightened age nobody won't bid on this elegant piece o' property. Bring up that ar hoss here, and we'll club 'em together, and offer 'em both in one lot."

The horse alluded to was Puck, and as he was slowly led out I started forward and uttered a loud exclamation of surprise and anger.

"Hello! my little man, keep yer shirt on, don't bile over," cried the auctioneer, looking up patronizingly to the balcony. The crowd all laughed rudely and boisterously, and my mother drew me away.

"Git on that critter now, my buck—that's right. Now tech him up and show off yer points and hisen, too."

"Now, gentlemen, what's bid fur 'em both—say it quick—gim me sumthin' to start 'em. How much? Seven hundred dollars, eh?

Ha! ha! ha! Where's the gentleman what bid all that pile on them two critters? Whar is he?"

A voice suggested that they'd better "carry him out on two cobs."

"Oh, no, we won't do that, my friends Who'll advance on that? Eight hundred do I hear? eight hundred, goin, goin, make haste, feller citizens, I can't waste my breath here, in this glorious land o' liberty and independence for nuthin'. How much is bid for them two critters? Trot along thar, and let the folks see you, buck."

The bidding here became animated, and Felix and Puck were soon sold to some stranger for nine hundred dollars.

"The next lot on the bill, gentlemen, is two old she-niggers, both got the rheumatiz, and not worth much, no how. Hobble along here and let's see ye."

Aunt Dinah and another old woman were now brought forward.

"I hain't got the rheumatiz at all—what ye tell 'em that fur?" muttered Aunt Dinah indignantly.

The auctioneer laughed heartily—the crowd laughed, and then looked up to see if we did not laugh too, the thing was so exceedingly humorous—so very amusing.

My mother, offended at the rude stares of the assembly, left the balcony, and telling my sisters kindly to come in, she walked slowly to my room and sunk upon a chair, as she buried her face in her handkerchief and gave way to violent weeping. "And this is the middle of the nineteenth century, and this the land of Washington and Jefferson! Oh! my God, how can such things be, and the full light of day streaming brightly upon them?"

"Mamma, dear mamma, do not sob so wildly—do not speak so." And Helen tried, with her low, soft voice, to soothe her.

A great clapping of hands and loud laughter interrupted us. We all rushed to the balcony again.

Lulu, my sisters' waiting-maid—a bright, beautiful mulatto, almost white, with regular features and long, waving black hair, was upon the block. She was dressed with exquisite neatness, in a cast-off dress of Helen's. Her hair, in the nervous agitation and

embarrassment of the moment, had become detached from the comb, and had fallen in dark, waving masses, about her shoulders. This it was, which had occasioned the rude laughter, as she hastily endeavored to put it up again. Her cheeks were covered with blushes, and her eyes cast modestly down. Lulu was scarcely seventeen, and as she had been brought up from childhood by my mother had always lived in the house as waiting-maid. My sisters had taught her to read and write, to embroider and to sew fine needle-work. These accomplishments, and her beauty, were now trumpeted by the auctioneer to enhance her value, as a piece of property. My mother looked wildly around.

"Where is your father, Edgar ?"

He was walking nervously up and down the gravel-path, and appeared very much agitated. I pointed him out to her.

The auctioneer was just commencing to cry the bids. "Mr. Trevor," called my mother, in great excitement, bending over the iron balustrade, "save Lulu; for God's sake, save her!"

Lulu heard the beseeching voice amid all the rude remarks and boisterous clamor of the crowd, and instantly turned towards us. Her hands were clasped, and timidly upraised. Her head inclined slightly forward, and her eyes looked so helplessly, imploringly to my mother, that we all turned away to hide our tears.

"Oh! Miss' Madelaine, Miss' Madelaine, do save me, for God's sake!"

Her wild, piteous cries thrilled to my heart, and even affected the rude herd who stood gazing silently upon her. The auctioneer paused and turned aside his head. My father still paced back and forth, with his hands behind him and his eyes cast upon the ground. My mother repeated her appeal. Deep stillness reigned throughout the excited assemblage, interrupted only by the sobbing of Lulu. She had turned an imploring glance upon my father, as her mistress addressed him. Her hands were clasped in earnest supplication. She had sunk upon her knee on the elevated block, and her whole form was thrown forward in an attitude of breathless ex-

citement to listen for her master's answer. But he did not speak. Then her head sunk upon her bosom, and she covered her face with her hands. We could hear her smothered sobs and moans above all the murmur of voices.

The mid-day sun streamed calmly down, bathing the earth in beauty. Afar stretched the glorious landscape, visible from Aspenwold for distant miles. Spring robed the earth in verdure, and birds sang murmurous music in the leafy woods. Faint breezes, odorous with sweetness, stirred the stilly air and kissed the bending rose leaves.

"How much am I offered for this likely yaller gal, gentlemen? It looks mighty hard to sell sich a pritty cretur, but it's the law; and of course whatever is law is right. Come, bid up,—it's gittin' nigh on to dinner time. What am I offered to start her?"

A lecherous looking old creature, bearing the image of a man, bid seven hundred dollars. Another person, a genteel looking young gentleman, offered fifty more. And so the bidding went on with great excitement from several opposing parties. Lulu raised her head to glance with fearful interest as each new bid was called; but at length the coarsely dressed lecherous old man out-distanced all competitors, and the fair, delicate girl was, in auctioneer phraseology, "knocked off" to him for eight hundred and fifty dollars.

A sensual smile of intense satisfaction lighted up his gross, beastly face, as he turned upon his heel, and cracked his huge horse-whip self-complacently.

Lulu was assisted from the block by the auctioneer, and bursting wildly away, sprung up the steps, and entered the house. We all left the balcony as the mansion and farm were offered for sale. My mother and sisters went down stairs to see Lulu and the other servants, and bid them farewell. I followed a few moments afterward, and found my mother in the hall, at the foot of the staircase, surrounded by kneeling and weeping women and children.

Lulu had thrown herself at Helen's feet, and grasping the folds of her dress, clung wildly to her. My sister was endeavoring to soothe her, but without avail.

"I won't go with him! I'll kill myself before I do! O, Miss Helen, can't your pa buy me back? can't he, Miss Madelaine?"

"God only knows, Lulu. I will see him."

Aunt Dinah had been purchased by a neighboring farmer, and most of the other negroes had been sold to persons not very far distant. Their grief was not, therefore, so excessive, nor were they by nature so sensitive and refined as Lulu. None could tell who was the purchaser of Felix and the pony. I inquired, but all the satisfaction I could get was that some stranger on horseback had bought them both, and paying down the money, had galloped off. Who he was no one knew, as there was nothing very remarkable about his appearance.

The auctioneer was still "crying" the estate. Everything else had been sold. "Going, *going*, GONE!" The sale was over, and Col. Easton, a resident of a neighboring town, was the fortunate purchaser of Aspenwold. We had never heard of him, but he was said to be a gentleman, and we were glad—if gladness were possible in such a case, that the place had fallen to some one who would be likely to take care of it. My mother was distributing presents to the weeping creatures thronging about her, and trying to cheer them by the hope of better times, and promising that if Mr. Trevor ever became able, to buy them all back again. Lulu was still sobbing as though her heart would break, for the comparatively happy lot of her companions only aggravated her grief by the contrast it offered to her own fate. The crowd were slowly dispersing. Col. Easton was engaged in interesting conversation with my father out upon the piazza, and the owners of the negroes had sent word to them to prepare for their new homes.

This only increased the excitement and confusion. My mother stood in the centre of the long hall, striving to appear composed as the faithful creatures pressed around her to kiss her hand, and receive some token of remembrance.

The servants knew very well that they were not sold by my father, but by the law. Amid sobs and wild wailings of sorrow, they reluctantly separated from their loved mistress.

They passed sadly along the hall, shaking my sisters and me by the hand with all the cordial earnestness of their grateful, warm hearted natures, and slowly reached the lawn, where their masters were waiting to receive them. All had gone but Lulu.

" Hallo thar, gal, ain't ye done blubberin' and cryin' yet?" bellowed a harsh imperious voice at the hall door, belonging, as we perceived, to Lulu's future master. And the man came swaggering into the hall with a great horsewhip stuck jauntily under his arm, and a large brass headed cane in his hand. My mother stared in cold astonishment, and curled her lip haughtily. My sisters and I drew back in undisguised fear.

" Better be gittin' ready as quick as possible, to go home, gal, got a long way to go this evenin'—live away off on the Kanituckee river 'mong the cliffs."

And he halted in the middle of the room, and looked down lasciviously upon Lulu, still kneeling, and shudderingly clasping my mother's dress.

" Would you not be willing to sell Lulu back to us?" said my mother, overcoming her repugnance and speaking blandly.

" Could'nt think of it—got too good a bargain—easily sell her for a cool thousand, *when I get tired of her*—wouldn't sell her now for any price," answered the man, bluntly.

" But she is so much attached to us, and we all love her so, and she dreads to leave us," urged my mother.

" O, it's all human natur'—soon git over it—two or three days be as merry as a cricket agin."

" Never," sobbed Lulu in a tone of unutterable anguish, " never."

" Well, pack up yer duds—got no time to waste—long ways to go." And he turned and stalked rudely out of the hall.

" Accursed be such a monster," muttered my mother through her teeth, her eyes blazing with anger. " O that I were a man." Then turning hastily to Lulu, still staring with a fixed look of despair—" you have the worst to fear, Lulu, from this savage old wretch, but remember"—and she bent forward to Lulu's ear, " *death before dishonor*. Dry your tears, my child, and I will prepare you for

your departure. Should we meet no more upon earth," and my mother raised her neck proudly, and her eyes seemed beaming with inspiration, "remember there is a heaven beyond those bright blue skies, Lulu, and a God of eternal justice. Mr. Trevor will not redeem you—*I*, alas, have not the power."

"I believe it," answered the girl, devoutly clasping a small Bible, the gift of my mother, to her heart, and for a moment seemed more composed.

"All ready here," called Lulu's master, driving up to the front door in a rough looking wagon, drawn by two fat, clumsy horses. "Make haste, gal—off right away."

"My mother returned with a carpet sack and Lulu's bonnet, and put it tenderly upon the head of the poor girl. Then clasping her cordially by the hand, and bending down to allow Lulu to kiss her forehead, she turned away unable to control her agitation, and sunk upon a chair. My sisters all gathered around Lulu, who seemed almost like one of the family, and shook hands as they tenderly pressed a ring, or some other little gift upon her.

I extended my hand also, and she clasped me to her breast, smoothed my hair back from my forehead, and gazing fondly into my eyes, imprinted a kiss upon my temples in silence, and approached the door.

The man sat upon the seat in the front of the wagon, holding the reins, and motioned to Lulu to get up by the side of him. My father came forward at this time to bid her adieu. She shook hands with him, but displayed no emotion at parting. My mother and sisters crowded to the door to see her off. My father assisted her into the wagon, and as she would not take the seat by her master, he told her to sit down in the straw. The man cracked his whip, and off rolled the clumsy vehicle. Lulu sat crouchingly down, but as the horses began to move off, she turned and looked wildly after us. A bend of the avenue hid her from our sight for a moment, and when she came again into view, she was still kneeling upon the straw, but her hands were outstretched, and turned

pleadingly, imploringly to us. Her face wore an expression of unutterable despair, which I shall never, never forget. Intervening trees here obstructed the view, the wagon clattered away, and we saw Lulu never more. But several months afterwards strange rumors reached us concerning her. It was said that the old libertine who had purchased her, lived in a lonely desolate house, upon the banks of the Kentucky river, with not a white inhabitant upon the place. He had an old negro woman for a housekeeper, owned several other slaves, and was quite wealthy.

A few days after they arrived at home, he sent away the housekeeper, and Lulu was left alone with him in the house. He approached her and attempted some liberties. She sprang from him, and rushing to his bed, tore off the pillows, and grasped a pistol which he always kept concealed there. He approached her again. Frantic with rage and despair, she fired. He fell reeling amid the smoke of the pistol, upon the floor. Dashing wildly past the groaning wretch, she leaped through the door. She reached the brink of the neighboring cliff, towering two hundred feet above the rushing waters. One incoherent prayer, breathed hurriedly to heaven—one wild, appalling leap—one long wail of agony—a plash, a gurgle, and the soul of the lost Lulu was free.

CHAPTER XV.

We were all sitting upon the front piazza, a few days after the sale, enjoying the cool, evening breeze, which had sprung up since sunset. The twilight was slowly gathering around, and the mournful sound of the whippowil fell strangely upon the unbroken silence. No one had spoken for some time.

"I wish I only knew who bought Felix," said I, interrupting the silence.

"Pshaw," rejoined Fanny, "I don't care anything about him, he is a boy and can take care of himself—but Lulu, poor, poor Lulu."

My mother sat at one end of the piazza, but within hearing distance, her arm leaning upon the light iron railing, and gazing sadly into the dim twilight. My father, at the other extremity, silent and thoughtful.

"What sound is that?" exclaimed my mother, starting. We all listened. We heard the iron gate opening upon the public road, creak slowly upon its hinges, and then shut. A moment afterwards horses' hoofs could be heard distinctly clattering upon the avenue. I sprang up with a cry of joy.

"That is Puck, mamma, I'll bet anything it's Puck, I know his tread too well to be deceived."

"I'm not a sporting character, Edgar," replied my mother kindly, but rebukingly. "I think, however, it is Puck."

The sounds now increased. Running down the steps I listened eagerly. Just then the horseman emerged from the tangled masses of verdure among which the road wound, and appeared full in sight, coming towards us. The twilight had grown so dim by this time that it was difficult to distinguish a person even at a short distance.

"How de do, massa Edgar?" called the horseman eagerly, as he approached me. "Don't ye know Felix?" It was he indeed, and I had not known him.

"Where in the world did you come from, Felix?" asked my father in astonishment, as the boy dismounted. He shook hands with me eagerly, as I ran up to him.

"I tell ye a'ter awhile, mas'r—I got so much to tell," and he bowed deferentially to my mother and sisters, and submissively to my father. I sprang joyfully upon Puck and caressed his neck, as my mother questioned Felix. The pony neighed instinctively and tossed his head knowingly as I patted his neck and braided his long, black mane.

"Who bought you, Felix?" inquired my mother, "we could not learn."

"Some stranger man," replied the boy, "and he made me git right up on Puck, as soon as he paid the money and got a bill for us, and whippin' up his hoss as hard as he could, we galloped away off, ever so fur."

"Where to?" interrupted my father.

"De Lord only knows, fur I never seed that part o' creation afore, and don't know what de calls it. But ater we got away up thar we didn't stop—and kep on ridin' an ridin', as hard as blazes, and then we soon got to a town. I axed the man what place it was, and he said Lectiontown."

"Ah, Lexington, he means," explained my mother.

"Yes'm, that is it. Well, ater we got thar we rid up to a great, big house, with a whole lot o' winders, that they calls a hot-hell, whar folks stop to get ther dinners, and thar we both got off, me and the man. I was sort o' skeered and didn't want to go in, but sez he to me, sez he, 'Come along here, boy,' and so I thought I'd better go, case, ye know, mas'r, he might o' shot me ef I hadn't."

"Possibly," I exclaimed, sneeringly, at Felix's cowardice. "Well."

"Well I followed him in, an he tuk me up stars, 'crost a long, dark

passage, and then he stopped at a door with figers on it, and knocked. 'Come in,' sed somebody inside, and in we went."

"And what occurred then?" asked my mother, as Felix paused.

"Why, thar we saw a little, dried-up lookin' man, sittin' in a big arm-cheer, all rolled up in a fine, big-flowered dressin-gown, and when I got in, he sez, 'Sit down, Felix.' So I sot down wunderin' how, in the dickens, he knowed my name. I looked at him mighty hard, and he looked at me; then sez he agin, 'Felix, would you like to go back and live with your young master Edgar again?' Sez I, O Lord, I would that. Then the little dried-up man jabbered somethin' to the other man that I couldn't understand, and he went out. Ater a while he cum back with another man with big gold specs on, and then they had all sorts a doin's. The little man told me to cum back next day, and he'd give me my liberty. So I went back next day and he give it to me—here it is."

And Felix drew a folded paper from his pocket and extended it to my father.

"Here's another little paper, he told me to give to you, massa Edgar, with his complimens." I grasped it eagerly. "He didn't give me the complimens, though, but I 'spose they'r in the paper."

"I dare say they are, Felix," said I, laughing slily, as I ran off into the house to read the note with my mother and sisters, who were still marvelling at Felix's wonderful narration. I could clearly perceive that they did not believe more than half that the boy had told, but even then it was rather a romantic story. My father soon followed, bearing Felix's liberty, as he had termed his "free papers."

"What did you do with Felix, Mr. Trevor?" asked my mother.

"Sent him away to put Puck in the stable, and then told him to go to the kitchen and tell Aunt Kitty to give him his supper. It's a strange adventure, and I must say I cannot understand all of it."

"Yes, very strange, but perhaps Edgar's note will explain it."

I broke the seal, and drawing near the lamp, read as follows—

"By the bearer, Felix, (now a freeman) little Edgar will receive

his pony, which the undersigned sincerely hopes will obviate the necessity of that contemplated trip to the Ohio river, which a certain young gentleman so enthusiastically advocated one moonlight night, upon the waters of the little lake. The undersigned begs leave to tender his compliments to little Edgar, and assure him of his tender regard.—BEL-Z-BUB"

This note only increased the mystery, for no one could understand it but myself, and as I had given the writer my promise not to say anything about him, I was very much perplexed what to do.

"What does it all mean, Edgar?'

"I can't tell, mamma, I promised not to speak of it."

"Bel-z-Bub," repeated Fanny, glancing over my shoulder. It must have come from him, I think, mamma—it smells sulphury."

After a great deal of persuasion I was finally induced to relate enough to explain satisfactorily the return of the pony and Felix.

"Do not tell us any more, my boy, if you pledged your word to the gentleman. Never betray your honor. Though why any one in this country should take such interest in you, I cannot imagine. But what is to be done with Felix, Mr. Trevor?"

"We will have to hire his services now, I presume. He is a free man, you are aware—see, here is his liberty," and my father, with a smile, laid the parchment upon the table.

CHAPTER XVI.

It had been decided between my father and Col. Easton, the purchaser of Aspenwold, that in one month he should take possession of the place. Before that time expired, my father thought he would be able to make arrangements to remove to some other part of the country, and to engage in business. What kind of business he had determined to pursue, I did not know. A short time after the return of Felix, he went off on a visit to a distant part of the State, and was gone several days. My mother did not appear particularly well pleased after his return, therefore I inferred that the visit had not been as successful as she probably anticipated. As to the particulars, I did not learn. My mother was not very communicative, and I did not like to ask her any questions.

So the beautiful May days dragged wearily away at Aspenwold, where once all had been pleasure and happiness. I did not now attend school—in fact, I had not done so since my rebellion against the redoubtable Mr. Eliah Dowd. My mother gave me lessons, and I wandered off into the woods—Felix and I, when he had nothing to do—and studied, and dreamed long, bright day dreams, beneath the green branches. The house and all about it, seemed ever surrounded by sad remembrances. The negro quarters—where once all had been mirth and joyous revelry, and where the banjo tinkled merrily to the wild dances of the negroes, beneath the radiance of the full moon, when the tasks of the day were over—were now silent and deserted.

Aunt Kitty alone, served in the spacious kitchen. The stables,

where in better days, a half score of horses had champed proudly in their stalls, were now alone tenanted by Puck, and he the gift of a stranger.

Therefore, we roamed far away into the deepest, wildest recesses of the neighboring forest, and in the happy thoughtlessness of boyhood, forgot that there was a world where men bought and sold their brothers—where homes and firesides were traffic and merchandise, and where all things change.

My father was again absent on a visit to a little thriving village about thirty or forty miles distant. He had been gone nearly a week, and when he returned, he told us that he had rented a neat, comfortable house, and had made arrangements to go into business.

My mother asked him to describe the village, and the residence he had selected. He did so, and she seemed very well satisfied. "And when shall we remove," she asked.

"In about two weeks, my dear, the time at which I agreed to let Col. Easton have possession."

It soon became known in the neighborhood, that we were to leave in a short time, and many of the neighboring families called upon my mother, to pay their respects and adieux. She had never been upon terms of great intimacy with any of them, but had exchanged the usual courtesies and visits of a country neighborhood. Occasionally, she had given a grand dinner party, and invited them all to partake of her hospitalities. They usually ate voraciously, and enquired how everything was made, and the staple of the conversation, I well remember, was generally, the best mode of hatching out and "raising" young chickens and goslings—the newest style of weaving plaid linseys and jeans, and the troubles which they all individually endured from the pilfering and lying propensities of their negroes.

My mother always said they bored her, and she was heartily glad when they were gone. I do not intend to convey the impression that there were no educated, intelligent women in our vicinity, but I do say that the greater portion of them, were such as I de-

scribe. The men were much more intellectual and intelligent than their wives and daughters, and with the exception of occasional rudeness in manners—which was attributable to want of knowledge of the usages of society, they were very pleasant company.

My mother, sisters, and aunt Kitty, were busily engaged one morning in packing up things preparatory to the contemplated removal. It was a week before the time for our departure, and all the rooms were in confusion, as a matter of course. I had been told by my mother, several times, in gentle tones, to get out of the way, and had been mischievously chased from the house by my sisters, with brooms and dusting brushes. So I went out upon the piazza thinking that was the safest place I could find, and sat gazing idly down the avenue.

I had been lounging for some time, without seeing anything unusual or uncommon, when I suddenly heard strange female voices, laughing heartily, and talking with great apparent animation. Presently, as I still gazed inquiringly in the direction of the sounds, three women upon horseback, two of them with children in their arms, and small negro boys behind them, rode deliberately up towards the house, staring impertinently all about them, as though they contemplated purchasing the place.

They looked me out of countenance, and just as the foremost among them was about to speak, I sprung up and ran in to announce the new arrivals.

And what a storm the announcement created! My mother wished they were all in Guinea, with their brawling brats. Aunt Kitty declared they should not have any dinner, and said maliciously that "that was all they cum fur."

Helen and Bel told mamma she had better go down and receive them, as they were getting off, and making themselves "quite at home."

"*I* wouldn't do no sich thing, missis—they's no business callin' at sich a time as this. Let 'em take 'emselves off home agin—low-flung dirt, any how," said Aunt Kitty, ill-naturedly, looking out

from the window. "Thar's Misses Grubbs, with that squallin', dirty-nosed little heathen o' hern, and Misses Dr. Skimlet, with another little monkey, and a dirty nigger boy to nuss it.—But who is that other woman? O, 'pon my word, it's Misses Hudson, the only lady among 'em: and the Lord only knows how she got into sich company! They's all comin' in the hall, Misses," continued Aunt Kitty, turning from the window. My mother was smoothing her hair at a mirror.

"Go and show them into the library, Aunt Kitty, and tell them I'll be down presently. I suppose I shall have to make myself agreeable," she added, turning to us, and smiling comically.

"Yes, mamma, and ask them how 'ther pertaters is growin',' and 'how the craps looks,'" said I, imitating Mrs. Grubbs.

"Hush, Edgar; you should not ridicule the poor woman,—she never had the benefit of an education," rejoined my mother, gently, but smiling as she uttered it.

"Take him down with you to talk to Mrs. Grubbs, mamma," said Bel; "it will be a just punishment."

"I showed 'em in, Misses, an' told the two young darkies to stay out in the hall with the babies, or I'd scalp both of 'em," exclaimed Aunt Kitty, entering the room, puffing like a porpoise.

"Very well, Aunty, that was right. You can pack all the light articles, girls, and leave the rest for Aunt Kitty and Felix. Come, Edgar, will go with me?"

"I would rather not, mamma, just now," answered I, pleadingly.

"If you stay with us you will have to commence work," said Bel and Helen.

"Better go, Edgar," whispered Fanny,—"you will then hear all the remarks Mrs. Grubbs makes."

So I went with my mother.

"How de do, Mrs. Trevor?" exclaimed Mrs. Grubbs, running up to my mother and grasping her by the hand, as we entered the room, "and how's all the family?"

"All quite well, I thank you. Good morning, Mrs. Skimlet.

Mrs. Hudson, I am happy to see you;" and my mother shook them all by the hand in her graceful, engaging manner, and smilingly requested them to be seated.

"We heerd you was going to leave this part o' the country, Misses Trevor, and thought we'd come over and spend a day with you afore you left, and tell ye all good-bye."

"Ah! thank you," murmured my mother blandly.

"So I told my old man he might eat his dinner by hisself to-day, as I was goin' out visitin,' and then I sent Dorcas Amelia over to see ef Misses Skimlet and Misses Hudson would go along; both sed they would, and so here we are." And Mrs. Grubbs having delivered herself, smoothed the folds of her home-made linsey gown, and commenced rocking industriously in her chair.

"I hope we have not intruded, Mrs. Trevor," said Mrs. Hudson, apologetically "I regretted after starting that we had not called sooner, as I thought you might be packing your things, perhaps."

"Yes, we have been arranging some of the lighter articles to-day, but shall not commence in earnest until to-morrow."

"I beg of you not to put yourself to any trouble on our account," rejoined Mrs. Hudson, eagerly.

"O, no, indeed," chimed in Mrs. Grubbs and Mrs. Skimlet.

My mother assured them it was no trouble whatever to entertain such agreeable company, and hoped they would all enjoy themselves during the visit, etc., etc.

I left the room just then, wondering how my mother could make such a remark, but excusing it upon the ground that no one can mix much with the world without sometimes either offending their visitors or making false assertions.

Walking through the hall, I halted a moment to look at the two babies and their sable nurses, and then went to see Aunt Kitty. She was standing up by the kitchen table, as I arrived at the door, with a huge cleaver in one hand and a large cabbage in the other—her sleeves rolled up to the elbows, and looking as terrible as an executioner. The stalk was still attached to the cabbage, and Aunt Kitty elevated the cleaver to sever it.

"I wish it was Misses Grubbs' head," muttered she, maliciously, as she brought down the instrument savagely, and the severed cabbage went spinning across the floor.

"Why, Aunt Kitty! I am astonished at you. I thought you were a member of the Methodist church."

"Well, so I am, chile, but a pusson can't allers be good. The devil's about sometimes, puttin' wickedness into folks' heads when they ain't a-watchin'."

"He must have been near when Mrs. Grubbs started here," I suggested.

"S'pect he was!" said the old woman, sententiously.

"Are you going to give them a good dinner, Aunt Kitty?"

"I oughtn't to give 'em nothin' but bacon and cabbages; but to keep up the credit o' the family, I s'pect I'll have to try myse'f."

"And then for Mrs. Hudson's sake—you know she is such a good, pleasant woman."

"Sure enough she is, chile; yes, I'll give 'em a good dinner. They sha'n't go off and say 'them Trevors is all broke to smash—can't even give a pusson a decent dinner when they go to call on 'em,'—no, that they sha'n't as long as these old fingers can work!"

"But you need not make any great effort; I dare say they live on corn bread, and pork and beans at home."

"Sartinly they does—don't know how to cook nuthin' when they have it. Whar's Felix, honey?"

"I don't know, Aunty."

"The nasty, good-fur-nuthin', triflin' vagabon'—always gone when a pusson wants anything done!" and Aunt Kitty walked out to the door as I moved away, and setting her arms a-kimbo, called out lustily, "Fee-lix! Fee-lix!"

"Comin', Aunty, comin';" and the boy came running around the corner of the house.

"Go and ketch three or four o' them fat pullets, and wring their heads off for dinner!"

"Yes'm."

"Be quick about it, sir, or you'll git this board split over yer head, you lazy, yaller, free nigger!"

Felix shrugged his shoulders comically, and ran off after the chickens. He was accustomed to Aunt Kitty's terrible threats, and heard them very coolly, as he well knew that they were never executed.

Our visitors remained until after dinner, and departed late in the afternoon.

My mother and sisters parted from Mrs. Grubbs and Mrs. Skimlet with cool indifference, but cordially clasped the hand of Mrs. Hudson, and sorrowfully murmured—"Farewell!"

CHAPTER XVII.

NEARLY all the furniture had been packed and sent off to our new home—the rooms were almost stripped, and now looked sadly desolate. I wandered sadly about the grounds, visiting each well-remembered spot, and lingering in the winding avenues, crossing the grounds in all directions, wherever there was an opportunity of a fine view or glimpse of scenery. How dear, how doubly dear to us now, that we were so soon to leave them. I had ridden all about the neighborhood, visiting the youthful friends with whom I had gone to school, and now I could sorrow all alone. I had been absent from home ever since dinner, and it was the last day we should be at Aspenwold.

The sun had long since set, and the shadows of spectral twilight were trooping slowly over the earth. Having left Puck at home, I was strolling sadly through the same old forest where I had met my strange, little companion, Bel-z-Bub. It was growing darker every moment, and I walked hurriedly along, and soon reached the meadow, which lay between the forest and the grounds surrounding the house. I thought myself safe upon arriving here, and soon heard Felix singing as loud as his lungs would allow, and stopping every few moments to call in an elevated, chanting voice, for me. He was much astonished when I replied, and said that my mother had become alarmed and sent for me. So we went home together, and upon arriving at the piazza found my mother anxiously waiting.

"Where have you been, Edgar ?—you little truant. I was fearing Belzebub had caught you again in the woods, and carried you off."

"O no, mamma, I was only telling the old trees good-bye, and taking a last look at the little school-house." I gave her my hand and she led me in to the hall. Carpets had been taken up, the pictures removed, and the bare floor echoed strange and ghostly to our tread.

"Shall we go to-morrow, mother?"

"Yes, if to-morrow comes, and God spares us all. Come in to the table, you haven't eaten anything yet."

"I'm not hungry—I can't eat to-night."

"Cannot eat! are you unwell, my boy?"

We entered the apartment and sat down. The table stood in the centre of the floor. There was no carpet, and the curtains had been taken down. Aunt Kitty crouched upon a low stool, with her head bowed upon her knees, was weeping bitterly. My father and sisters were in the library, seeing that the books were all properly packed.

It was a night of sadness and sorrow. The sun had set in gorgeous, cloudy splendor, but now darkness shrouded the earth, and the dreary wind moaned amid the tops of the tall, swaying trees. Suddenly it increased in violence, and low, ominous mutterings of distant thunder rolled through the brooding blackness. Quick flashes of vividly-bright lightning gleamed, ever and anon, through the pitchy clouds, and then the rain came, tremulously pattering upon the roof like the tread of invisible spirits. My mother arose and closed the shutters, to exclude the glare of the lightning. The thunder now rolled in reverberating peals, and shook the house to its foundations; the wind blew fiercely, and the rain came pouring down in torrents. The storm continued until about ten o'clock, and then the clouds lifted and floated far away, as the moon rose slowly and climbed the starry pathway. We slept very little that night, and were up betimes in the morning.

The rain had refreshed vegetation, and the flowers seemed almost to breathe the delicious atmosphere. Aunt Kitty was to remain at Aspenwold, and come on afterwards with the wagons and the furni-

ture—for railroads at that time were unknown. My father had hired a vehicle from the neighboring village to convey us to Millville, and it came noisily rumbling up, just as we finished an early breakfast. All things were in readiness. He went out to have the trunks strapped behind the carriage, and my mother and sisters put on their bonnets in silence. Then they all looked tearfully around upon the familiar rooms and the far-stretching landscape, which they had almost considered a part of their home, and could repress their emotions no longer. Bel burst into tears, and Helen and all, except my mother, wept.

"Do not weep, my children, tears cannot redeem the broad, fertile acres of Aspenwold, nor give you back the home of your childhood."

"The carriage is waiting," said my father, entering.

"We must have one last farewell view from the roof," observed my mother, calmly, "and then we go."

The house was of brick, and constructed with a flat roof; a circular stairway led up to this, and from its summit could be obtained a magnificent view of the surrounding grounds and the country for miles distant.

My mother led the way in silence and we all followed her. We reached the roof, and the glorious scene burst like a dream of bewildering loveliness upon us. I had scarcely ever been upon the top of the house, and my mother had forbidden Fanny and myself from visiting it alone, as she feared we might meet with some accident.

We stopped breathless and silent. The sun had just risen, and the eastern vapors rolled slowly away before him. The ether was a clear, dazzling field of azure, and the heaped masses of clouds lay lazily in the upper air like mountains of drifted snow. The country rolled away in gently undulating stretches from the elevation of Aspenwold, and several romantic streams wound tortuously through the lowland. Forests, waving fields of golden grain, distant farm-houses, green velvet-turfed meadows, and the gleam of

the cool, plashing waters of the picturesque Winnepoga, losing itself in the purple hills of the distant horizon, were all spread out before us in one vast panorama of dreamlike beauty.

We gazed in enthusiasm, for who could look upon such a scene and not have his heart quicken its pulsings, and his bosom swell with strange, mysterious emotions! We gazed, but then the thought of all we had lost and were leaving, came rushingly upon us, and my mother and all present turned aside mournfully and wept.

Loath to leave the beautiful scene, we still lingered, and gazed longingly through our tears. My father called us—for he said he could not bear the sight—and taking a last, long look, we slowly descended to the hall.

My mother gave some directions to Aunt Kitty and Felix in relation to the disposal of articles remaining in the house, and we stepped into the carriage.

My father was to return as soon as he escorted us to our new home at Millville.

Aunt Kitty shook us all by the hand, and then stood weeping upon the piazza as we sadly drove away.

Felix ran before to open the iron gate. The carriage halted a moment at the entrance to the grounds, and looking out from the windows, we beheld another equipage of elegant appointments, with two prancing bays, standing upon the other side, and apparently waiting until we should pass, to enter.

My mother looked up as we rolled leisurely through the gateway, and then suddenly drew back as her hitherto pale face flushed crimson. Col. Easton and his wife—a red-faced, vulgar-looking woman—sat in the waiting carriage, and bowed respectfully to us as the equipages passed. My father returned the salute, but my mother and sisters paid not the slightest attention to it.

"They might at least have waited until we left the place, before they came crowding us out of the gateway," observed my mother, with calm disdain.

"They only come to visit the grounds at present, Madelaine, not to remain here," explained my father.

"And beautiful grounds and gardens the place will show in a year or two, if I am any judge of physiognomy. What a countenance that woman had, and how execrably dressed! I dare say if we should visit Aspenwold next summer we would find the flower garden ploughed up and planted in cabbages—the little lake turned into a horse-pond, and the front lawn producing a fine crop of corn."

"Oh, no, Madelaine! do not judge Mrs. Easton so harshly."

"I do not judge harshly, but justly. I saw it all in her countenance as we passed them."

"Countenances are not always indices of character."

My mother did not reply, but looked sadly out upon the objects we were passing, as the carriage rolled on at a rapid rate, leaving the little village upon the left hand. The road, after winding down the gently sloping eminence from Aspenwold, had now reached the level surface of the plain.

"Look, Madelaine!" exclaimed my father, leaning forward, and pointing with his finger—"the last glimpse of Aspenwold!"

We all bent eagerly forward, and caught a view of the front windows, with the sun shining full upon them, gleaming through the dark green foliage of the surrounding trees. A moment—the carriage dashed forward, passed a contiguous forest, and the scene was gone.

My father sank back in his seat, and covered his face. I looked to see if man's feelings were as exquisitely delicate and refined as woman's. A tear trickled slowly through the out-spread hand. Ah! that one tear of my father's did much to abate my grief at leaving our beloved home!

After traveling all the morning upon a fine, smooth, macadamized road, we arrived at a small village about noon, where we dined, and allowed the horses to rest. Dinner over, we continued the journey, as we expected to reach Millville before dusk. After passing through a beautiful rolling country, we came to a more broken and uneven portion, some parts of which occasionally rose into high hills and knobs, covered to the tops with cedar and evergreens. Driving

on a few miles further, this disappeared, and the scenery became exceedingly fine, the country fertile and well cultivated. My father told us we were now near Millville; and in half an hour we entered the village: a rambling, scattered place, with a population of about six hundred inhabitants.

CHAPTER XVIII.

We drove up to the only inn that Millville afforded. A huge swinging sign with a diabolical picture of Gen. Washington painted upon it, informed the passing stranger that David Mackay kept the "American Hotel," and also provided "entertainment for man and beast." A great many idlers, and dirty nosed little boys ran up to see who the new comers were, and inspect their appearance. The arrival of a carriage was undoubtedly an event, and was treated with due consequence. The landlord, a broad, short, fat little man, with carroty hair, red whiskers, and a rosy nose to keep them in countenance, waddled gravely out of the bar room, like a demure gander going to a pond, and with a self complacent smile, asked "how de do?—good evenin' thank ye."

My father replied to him.

"By jolly toppers," said the little man with sudden animation, "'bleeve your'e the pusson that was here at my hotel a few weeks ago," and a smile lighted up the sleepy hollows of his jovial fat face

"Yes, I am the same person."

"Glad to see ye, sir—didn't 'zactly make ye out—see so many strangers." And the little gentleman who saw so many strangers, unfastened the carriage door, and then felt his upper lip with thumb and fore finger, to see if he had shaved cleanly in the morning.

"'Low me to help you, madam."

"Thank you, I can get out," replied my mother, stepping from the carriage, and then assisting my sisters and myself.

The landlord waved us gallantly into the hall with his fat little hand, and followed after, politely informing my mother that "that ar door with the brass latch opened into the bar room, and that other door with the glass nob, led to the parlor."

'We will go into the parlor, of course," said my mother, smiling; "when can we have tea, sir?"

"O, you can have tea or coffee either, and beef steaks, and biled hominy and beans, and——"

My mother interrupted the eloquent little man, to inform him that by tea, she meant supper, but did not care about beef steaks and hominy, and could even dispense with beans.

We entered the parlor, and sat down quite fatigued with riding all day in a close jolting carriage.

"I'll hurry off and have supper got smokin' hot, in no time."

"If you please," rejoined my mother, bending her head gracefully to the fat little landlord, rolling off like a lame elephant.

"Queer little creature," laughed Bel, "wonder if his wife is like him."

"We'll see when that 'smokin' hot supper' is served," answered Helen.

A short time afterwards, Boniface reäppeared, and politely informed us that supper was waiting. He led the way into the room, and we took our places.

A woman sat at the head of the table, pouring out the tea very demurely and cautiously, as though fearful of accidentally losing a drop. She was rather a plain looking person, with sandy hair, high cheek bones, peering, keen grey eyes, and had a little pug nose, turned comically and good naturedly upwards. She was very neatly dressed, and had a pure white kerchief folded across her bosom.

"Hoo do ye do, leddies?" said the little woman, bowing graciously to my mother, and sisters, as they entered. "Will ye tak tea or coffee for supper, thae nicht?"

My mother told her we would all take tea, if she pleased. "I perceive by your accent that you are from Scotland," she added. "Will you pardon me for asking what part of Auld Scotia you come from. I myself am of Scottish birth."

"Indeed, are ye?" replied the landlady. "Here, Janet, lassie

haud the leddies their tea." I'm unco glad to see ye, but wad never have kened ye by your tongue. Ye speak preecesely like the English. But I'm no answerin' yer question, we à my blethrin I cam frà Forfashire, near Perth."

"Ah," said my mother, "I am from D——, not far from Perth. You may have heard of my grandfather, who owned estates near there—Lord Balcour."

"Aye aye, monnie a time hae I seen his lordship ridin' out we' his groom and liveried flunkies. Ye dinna tell me you are his lordship's grand daughter? Gude life! Hoo long has yer leddyship been fra the auld country? It gars my auld heart beat quicker to see ye."

"So many years that I am almost an American now. How do you like the people here?"

"Weel, I hardly ken. They're sic a different sort of fuke fra the auld country people, that I must really confess, I dinna like them much. But then I dinna fash mysel' to gae oot amang them ony great deal. Janet, lass, spruce aboot and haud the leddies the hot bannocks."

"Not any more, I thank you," said my mother.

"Doo tak anither, ther no' as gude as ye git in Scotland, I ken very weel, but then their flour here canna compare we ours, ye ken—in fact, they dinna have onything as gude in this country as they do at hame. I canna believe the moon's as big even."

My mother laughed, and ventured to differ with the patriotic old lady upon this point.

"Edgar, where is your father, that he doesn't come in to tea?"—I did not know.

"I'll wager he's oot speerin at Davie aboot the toon—dinna rin after him, laddie, I'll send Janet."

And so Janet was sent, and my father soon afterwards entered.

"Your husband isn't a Scotchman, is he?" enquired my mother.

"Weel, I canna ca' him exactly ane of us, his father was Scotch, but he, puir bairn, cam into the warld in this country. Ye see

he canna speak ony like me." My mother smiled, and the old lady laughed and shrugged her shoulders.

"Beggin' yer leddyship's pardon, I hae na yet heerd yer name."

"Ah, Trevor, is it, I've heard o' them aboot Perth—all grea manufacturs, were na they?"

Yes, it is the same family," answered. my father

But no related to the gentles?"

"No, not of noble blood," replied my mother, "but none the worse for that—I have blood enough to serve for all the family."

"Weel—weel, what a warld this is," soliloquized the landlady, "if ony body had telt me, when I was a wee bit o' a bairn, playin' amang the heather, as my father tended the sheep, that I wad ever tak sic a notion as to come to America, an' go to keepin' an inn, I'd ha' set them doon for bein' as daft as warlocks. An then to tak it a' into consideration, and think the grand-daughter o' the great Lord Balcour, that cam ridin', but an ben, ilka day or two, we his liveried flunkies, wad iver ca' at our hoose to stop a nicht.—The Lord have us a' in his gude keepin', sic a wonderfu' thing I niver wad o' dreamed." And the old lady drew a long breath of astonishment as my mother remarked that "this was a world of changing scenes."

"Ye may weel say that, my leddy—but *I*, like a doited auld fool am na mindin' my business—tak anither cup o' tea, Mr. Tervor, an help yersel to the bannocks. Lassies, ye ar na thro' a'ready. Dear gude life, hoo sorry I am I hae na better fare to offer ye."

My parents both assured the kind old lady that her fare was excellent, and that they had never eaten more heartily in their lives but she still seemed to think she had not done herself justice, and so my mother requested Janet to bring her another cup of tea and a piece of toast. Mrs. Mackay rose from her seat, and notwithstanding my mother's kind expostulations, insisted upon waiting upon us herself. She bustled up to a cupboard in one corner of the room, and unlocking the door with a key she carried at her girdle, brought forth some delicious currant-jelly, and spreading it upon two slices of snow-white bread, urged it upon Fanny and myself, who very willingly took it.

Nothing could equal her kindness, and after the repast the evening passed in delightful conversation upon the subject dearest to all present—the land of their birth and childhood. The old lady was quite intelligent, and always spoke with her broad, Scottish accent. She told us that Davie—her husband—wanted her to abandon the habit, but that she was not going to do any such thing. " She didna care a pinch o' snuff if the people did laugh at her some times, that it was excusable, as they had nae better bringin' up."

At a late hour we retired to our beds, which, by the way, were exquisitely clean and neat, and the next morning set out to take a view of the little village, which was to be the place of our future residence. There was one principal street upon which the business houses or stores were all situated, and bordering upon this and opposite the most bustling part of it, a large square was laid out and planted with trees. Upon one of the corners of this square farthest from the shops, stood a church—upon the other extremity a market-house. The people thus admirably blended their wants, temporal and spiritual, and with a combination of conveniences rarely equalled, placed the house for the sustenance of the temporal man in close proximity with that of the man spiritual. Farther up the street were situated the residences of the wealthier citizens. The country around the village was extremely beautiful, as we could see, walking leisurely up the street on our way to the house which my father had rented. A large stream—which in England would be called a river, wound round the outskirts of the village in the shape of a horse-shoe, leaving a rich plain within the circuit, upon which the place was built. On the opposite sides of the stream the banks rose gradually from the water's edge and rolled away in gentle eminences and picturesque hills, covered with shrubs, with occasional trees, agreeably diversifying their prominences. We soon reached the house, as it was a walk of no great consequence to pass through the whole place. It was of dark-red brick—but the dashings of innumerable storms had given it a tinge of mellowness—with two rooms in the depth and one story in height, having bed-rooms above

the first story, formed by the breadth of the high pitched roof, and lighted by antique dormer windows. The house stood back a short distance from the street, and was surrounded by a neat railing, enclosing a yard, planted with luxuriant lilacs, rose-bushes and evergreens, and overshadowed by a large, venerable elm-tree. A little gravel pathway led up to the front door, which was protected by a small stoop or portico, and overgrown by wild honeysuckles and running roses. A large garden stretched away behind it, and altogether it was a comfortable, homelike place. We all liked it at first sight. My mother said she had no idea that Mr. Trevor had so much taste, and my father told her he made no pretensions to that quality, and that she must consider herself indebted more to accident than design for the house, as it was the only one in the village to rent, and was Hobson's choice, that or none.

As the former occupants had removed only a few days previously the key had been left for us, and unlocking the front door we eagerly entered to inspect and examine the rooms and internal arrangements. There were five apartments down stairs, all neatly—though not expensively finished, and hung with small-figured delicate colored paper. A staircase from the hall led up to two cozy little bedchambers, also papered and otherwise well finished. My mother and sisters were exceedingly well pleased with the interior and its arrangements, and thought that when the furniture was arranged we would have a delightful little home after all. True, it was quite different from the sumptuous expansiveness of the apartments of Aspenwold, but then contentment and love would still find happiness in its more humble rooms, until increased wealth should enable us to repurchase our former home.

CHAPTER XIX.

AFTER looking all through the house, which was pervaded by quite an ancient air of dignified gentility, we passed into the garden. This was planted with several varieties of fruit trees, and ragged-looking currant and gooseberry bushes, which needed pruning and trimming very much, if they ever expected—poor old things!—to obey the scriptural injunction to be fruitful and multiply.

Immediately behind the dwelling, and by the side of the mossy rail fence which divided the back yard from the garden, grew some three or four tall, prim, precise-looking Lombard poplars, piercing the upper air with their sharp, feathery tops, and looking altogether like a company of superannuated old vegetable bachelors in search of companions.

"With some slight alterations and changes," said my mother, stopping under the long shadows of the poplars, and speaking with hope and animation once more, "we can soon render the place quite habitable and pleasant. The lower rooms are airy and lofty, and this gives them the appearance of being larger than they really are. The house must have been built some years ago—was it not, Mr. Trevor?"

"Yes," rejoined my father, coming up from the garden as he spoke; "it was erected about thirty years ago by an old Virginian, and that length of time renders it quite a venerable mansion in this country. This old gentleman owned a large farm across the river, and was a member of 'one of the first families of Virginia,' being a lineal descendant of the little papoose which had the honor to sleep with the lovely Indian princess Pocahontas, whose father, the dusky

and naked emperor Powhatan, was sovereign of uncounted maize fields and boundless hunting-grounds."

"And pray, what has become of this gentleman?" enquired my mother.

"Well, this long-descended old Virginian unfortunately met with a little adventure, which was the cause of his rather undignified and somewhat precipitate departure to that unexplored region vulgarly denominated by newspaper reporters 'parts unknown.'"

"Ah!" exclaimed my mother; "proceed, my dear, we listen."

"This jolly old gentleman of the 'Anciente Dominion,' like a great many other respectable individuals, owned a large number of slaves, and worked them upon his farm, which you see stretching across upon the opposite side of yonder stream. Now, among the number of these slaves was one ungrateful, refractory fellow, who, being so heartless as not to appreciate the kindness and good-heartedness of his anciently descended master, occasionally broke forth into rebellion, and refused to work. His owner, like any other Christian gentleman would have done in such circumstances, was under the peculiarly disagreeable necessity of having him whipped; and seeing that the agreeable tintillation of the caressing little lash did not effectually exorcise the in-dwelling devil from the rebellious Zebo, he reluctantly resorted to another remedy."

"But, Mr. Trevor, do come to the point, and don't spin the story to an unnecessary length. Girls, we will take seats upon the grass—Edgar and his father being of the stronger sex, can continue standing."

My father continued:—

"As I said before, this ancient Virginia gentleman was compelled to resort to another mode of punishment. So he walked down to the village blacksmith, and ordered him, with all the commanding dignity of his ancient race, to construct for him a heavy iron bracelet, large enough to admit a man's ancle. It was done. Attaching a weighty chain to this, and fastening the chain to a pretty bauble in the shape of a clog of wood, the old Virginia gen-

tleman therewith ornamented the leg of the rebellious negro. And Zebo, whose duty it was to plough the large fields at that particular time, had the infinite pleasure of a Siamese-twin sort of companionship with his heavy chain and clog. This answered for awhile; but familiarity soon bred contempt and indifference, and Zebo in a short time cared very little about his troublesome companion, although it had, in clasping his limb, so tenderly worn the flesh away from the ancle, and Zebo was constrained to cover it with rags and cloths in order to retard the affectionate embraces of the rough iron. But the slave grew more unruly from day to day—the ungrateful fellow!—and finally committed *so unpardonable* a sin, that his kind master, the good, jolly old gentleman, was under the necessity of confining him in one of those upper cozy little rooms above stairs, and feeding him upon thin soup, and bread and water occasionally, by way of change. The overseer and the other negroes lived upon the farm, but Zebo's master wished to have him under his especial care and supervision. For fear the ungrateful, rebellious creature should in his confinement grow fat and lusty, the considerate and ancient Virginia gentleman diminished his daily quantity of thin soup, until it was scarcely sufficient to sustain a sentimental young boarding-school miss.

"A bright idea occurred to the humorous old gentleman one day, when he had nothing to amuse or occupy his attention. It was to go up and try and divert himself by a personal inspection of the ungrateful captive. So up to the little room mounts the dignified, anciently descended Virginian, with the blood of all the 'first families' in his swelling veins, and unlocking the door, found himself face to face with the chained Zebo, groveling in a corner.

"As the old Virginian entered with a smile of July warmth upon his patrician visage, the wicked Zebo arose to his feet and confronted him. The charitable Christian gentleman, who had led in a most unctious prayer at monthly class-meeting the day before, kindly inquired how Zebo liked his diet. The slave returned no answer.

"'Too enervating is it?' slily suggested the humorous old fellow

chuckling with laughter at the gaunt, hungry negro. 'Want to purify your blood, Zebo, and drive out the devil in you,' continued the old wag, poking the slave in the ribs with his gold-headed cane. 'How would you like a few lizards and toads in your soup, eh?—impart quite a delicious flavor, wouldn't it?—ha! ha! ha!' and the old fellow laughed until his fat abdominal rotundity shook like a bowl of jelly. 'Why don't you answer your master, you black, hang-dog scoundrel? Ha! what was that you said? told me to go where? I'll polish your manners for you, my buck! Take *that* and dream upon it!' And the old Christian gentleman, with the blood of all the 'first families of Virginia' hotly boiling in his contracting veins, upraised his arm, and while his usually calm, gentlemanly eyes glared like a wild animal's, struck the chained Zebo a mighty blow in the forehead with the elegantly chased gold-headed cane, and felled him to the floor like an ox. 'I'll teach you to tell your master to go to hell, you Ethiopian scoundrel!' And the gentlemanly old Virginian drew his delicate cambric handkerchief from his pocket, and wiping the polluted head of his cane, stamped it upon the floor with a resounding dignity. But it needed something more than the white handkerchief to wipe from the gold head of the walking-stick the dark stain which adhered to it. The body of the still motionless Zebo stirred not—the heart had ceased to beat, and the foul stain upon the gold head of the old gentleman's walking-cane was——*murder!*"

"And did they execute him?" exclaimed my mother and sisters, excitedly.

"Execute him!" repeated my father, laughing ironically, "why, my dear Madelaine and beauteous daughters, you almost tempt me to laugh. Execute the old Virginia gentleman for knocking his own property in the head!"

"But they would do so now, I'm sure," said my mother.

"Possibly they might *now*; but this has been twenty years ago and justice had not journeyed into these parts then, and so the old gentleman was not executed, although even among the rude back-

woodsmen, by whom he was surrounded, there grew up a powerful public sentiment, which filled him with apprehension. This dread cast a dark shadow across his every day path, and stern, accusing eyes looked even through the huge heaps of gold behind which he entrenched himself, and he trembled for his life. So he privately sold this garden, where you sit, Madelaine, and yon house which we are to occupy, and those broad fertile acres which roll away so grandly, and left the country forever."

We all sat motionless and in silence, wishing, doubtless, the same thing—namely, that my father had never rented such a house, which report said, was stained already with the foulest murder. No one acknowledged the superstitious dread of living in such a mansion, but I intuitively felt that the entire group experienced a repellant repugnance at the idea. In a moment, and whilst these vague undefined thoughts—if such they can be termed—were passing through our minds, my father again spoke.

"I do not wish to frighten you, my daughters, for I know your minds are too well balanced for that, and as for your mother, nothing frightens her—but merely to amuse you, I will repeat what the old village gossips told me when I rented the place."

"Well, papa," exclaimed my sisters, looking courageous.

"And you do not fear to hear it?

"Well, it is said that every Friday night—for it was upon an unlucky Friday that this awful deed was perpetrated—when the clock strikes twelve, that the front door, however securely locked and barred, slowly opens and swings back upon its hinges. A sound, as of some heavy, unseen person treading across the floor, echoes through the hall, and then footsteps ascend the stairs, and drag a heavy clanking chain, which cannot be seen by mortal eye, slowly up the steps, until the head of the staircase is reached. Then the sound ceases for a moment, and the door of the little bed chamber mysteriously flies open to the entrance of this supernal visitant. If the night is dark and windy, it is said that weird symphonies are played by ghostly fingers amid the swaying branches of the old elm tree, which stands in front of the house."

"That is childish nonsense, Mr. Trevor—we do not wish to hear any more of it"—and my mother rose from her seat upon the grass as though half offended, and we followed her example, my sisters and I.

"I tell the tale as 'twas told to me," repeated my father, laughing good humoredly. "If you'll go to the little chamber up stairs," he continued, "you will see a dark stain upon the floor, which soap and water have never yet been able to efface."

So we walked away to see this mysterious stain in broad daylight, and as my mother feared no spiritual interruptions, I took courage, and followed, with Fanny, to the haunted room. We reached the spot—we saw the stain, and gazing around the well papered, cozy little place, felt half inclined to doubt our father's legend. Had it been night, however, and the dim moonlight flickering through the elm trees, and fitfully falling upon the floor, we might have had more faith in the story. People are never afraid of ghostly visitants and spirit sounds, when there is plenty of healthy sunshine. And so we all went laughingly from the room, deriding our own terrors, and descended the staircase self-complacently bold, and courageous.

My father was waiting for us in the hall, with a quiet smile upon his kind, pleasant face. I ran up to take his hand, and at the same moment, the little cracked bell at the village inn, made some strange, asthmatic noises, as though it was far gone with a metalic whooping-cough, and did the best it could, (for which, by-the-by, it should not be laughed at,) to inform all listening ears, that dinner was ready, and about to be served.

Locking the front door carefully, we obeyed its discordant summons, and walked back towards the inn.

CHAPTER XX.

We were to remain at Mrs. Mackay's until Aunt Kitty and Felix should arrive with the remainder of the furniture, the greater portion of which was already at Millville. In two days they came, and straightway my mother and sisters busied themselves in arranging it in our new home.

The interior appearance of the house was entirely changed by the time the carpets were down, the curtains hung, and the several articles of furniture tastefully arranged. The largest front room down stairs was furnished as the parlor, and the back room, opening into it by large, folding-doors, tastefully fitted up with shelves, as a library. Across the hall, from the parlor, the other front room was appropriated as my mother's bed-chamber, and back of that was the dining-room, which again led into a little nook of a chamber, with one arched window, facing the east; this was set apart for me. No one would occupy Zebo's haunted room, and so my three sisters occupied the other little chamber in the opposite end of the house. My mother told them, laughingly, to lock their door securely every Friday night, and as the ghost never came until twelve o'clock, that there was not much probability of their hearing it, as they ought all to be asleep before that hour.

My father suggested that it was quite an inoffensive spirit, and never troubled any one about the house, if it was let alone.

"We will be careful never to meet it upon the steps, then," remarked Bel, "and, I dare say, it will behave itself."

Fanny wished to know if it was a black ghost, as Zebo had been of quite a sable complexion, but was positively assured that ghosts, when seen at all, were always white. In this age of refinement,

however, they, like the ancient Kings of Persia, never render themselves visible, but communicate alone by mysterious sounds.

"What absurdities," observed my mother, passing our group with a vase filled with fragrant flowers, which she had been gathering in the garden. "You would employ yourselves better, young ladies, to arrange those books in the library shelves," added she, in a tone of gentle rebuke.

"Mamma is a utilitarian, and does not believe that spirits visit the earth now-a-days, although the Bible teaches it," observed Helen.

"The Bible, as I understand it, teaches that angels visit the earth as ministering spirits, to watch over and guard us, but they are invisible and unheard. They may influence our thoughts and act upon our minds, for I believe that disembodied spirits—their souls being more sublimed and elevated than ours—may possess a magnetic or sympathetic power over our wills, and affect us in that way, without it being known to us."

"It appears to me, then," remarked Helen, "that it would be very little satisfaction for our relatives and friends to be in heaven if they could see and know all the miseries and sorrows we endure upon earth."

"We have no means of judging of the feelings of disembodied spirits, because they move in a different sphere from that of ours, and may not understand what we, in our clouded, short-sightedness, term trials and sorrows. Such things, to them, must appear exceedingly trivial and evanescent, in comparison with the infinities of the world they inhabit."

"But, mamma," rejoined Helen, "these spirits you speak of must know the different degrees and intensities of anguish and agony, for have they not previously experienced them in their state of mortality?"

"I admit it," answered my mother, "but do you ever, in your mortal state, with your soul or immortal spirit still imprisoned in earthy bonds—do you long remember any acute agony after it is past?"

"Mamma prevaricates," observed Helen, laughing, "but I think we are getting lost in unexplored regions.—Suppose we both turn earthward, and as odors are said to be potent magnets, we will even inhale the perfume of your flowers."

"It seems to me," replied my mother, advancing to meet Helen, "that a flower is typical, to some extent, of humanity. We see the flower, which is the body, and if it is lovely, we admire it. But the perfume, like the soul, mind, or intellect—for the terms are synonymous—is invisible and etherial, and is only perceptible to us through the medium of a—to some extent—spiritual sense."

"And permit me to add," said Helen, "that if the flower has no perfume or soul, as you term it, that we do not value it, even if beautiful."

"What mus' I git fur dinner, missus?" asked Aunt Kitty, entering and putting an end to the discussion, by reminding the two disputants that this was a matter-of-fact world, and that roast beef and fried chickens were still savory food.

The unexpected abruptness of the question set us all to laughing, and Aunt Kitty—good, simple soul—supposing we were ridiculing her, when, in fact, it was only the amusing appositeness of the two subjects, looked rather embarrassed and crestfallen, as she wiped the flour from her hands with her apron, and added, by way of explanation, that she thought it was time to get dinner.

"And so it is, Aunt Kitty—do not think we were laughing at you. It was only at something which we were speaking of just as you entered."

Aunt Kitty was mollified, and laughed too.

No one had yet learned what business my father intended engaging in during our residence at Millville; but at the tea table he told us.

He had saved enough from the wreck of his once ample fortune, to lift us above want, and said with a pleasant smile, that he had determined to drop the landed gentleman, and metamorphose himself into a village merchant, with a "very extensive stock

of staple and fancy dry goods, just imported from the eastern cities to be sold out immediately, at very reduced prices, &c., &c."

My mother did not like the change. She had an inveterate prejudice against trade, particularly in a petty retail business like this was expected to be, and could not very well reconcile the idea with her former aristocratic position, her ancient birth, and long and noble lineage.

"Was there nothing else, Mr. Trevor, that you could engage in but this petty peddling traffic in calico and tape?"

My father replied with some little asperity "that it was just as respectable as any other occupation, and was not looked upon in Kentucky as it would be in Scotland. There was no absurd, ridiculous prejudice in this country against tradesmen, and they, at least, in a small place like this, would move in the "very best society" in the village, and he ventured to say, that Mrs. Trevor's company would be anxiously sought by all the richest and best educated people in the neighborhood.

"Have you met any of the 'best society' since you have been here, Mr. Trevor?" enquired my mother with an ironical smile.

"I have met several very intelligent people, and I dare say you will come to like them very well after a while, though I can excuse your feelings at present."

"Good, generous Trevor, how considerate." And my mother changed the subject, by inquiring if there was a boy's school in the village, as she wished me to commence my studies again in a short time. Fortunately there was, and the conversation turned upon this topic, as the question of the mercantile business was dropped. It was determined that I should commence school in one week. My mother told me to brush myself up, (mentally, of course,) and have all my books ready, as she wished to make a man of me. With great reluctance, I must acknowledge that I did not much like the idea of being made a man—I vastly preferred remaining a boy, particularly when it cost so much trouble as going to school, and risking the chances of receiving an occasional flogging if I should

not study my lessons. The free and independent kind of life I had been leading ever since my encounter with Eliah Dowd, Esq., of "Connety-cut," had given me a distaste for the rigid discipline of Yankee school teachers.

When it was finally decided, however, I made no audible objection, but only enquired if the teacher was a Yankee. My father laughed good naturedly, and assured me that he was not, as he had taken the precaution to inquire. He was an Englishman, and had been educated at Cambridge.

"What in the world brought him here?" inquired my mother.

"What brought Mrs. Madelaine Trevor, the grand-daughter of a lord, here? and what brings all the strangely diversified people whom we meet in the United States?"

"They come to push their fortunes, I presume, but if I were only back in Scotland again, nothing should tempt me to leave it, I assure you."

"Ah," ejaculated my father, sententiously.

"But we will not speak of that subject now," continued she, "when do you purpose commencing business, Mr. Trevor?"

"In a few weeks. I cannot exactly determine yet. But really, do you not, upon sober second thought, and casting ancient prejudices aside, approve of it, Madelaine?"

"As you appeal to me thus nobly, I must admit, my dear, that I have been thinking since you first broached the subject, and I——"

"What, Madelaine—why do you hesitate?"

"I dislike the life, but alas, there is no other alternative—we must even submit to it."

And so it was "submitted to," as my mother had expressed it, and a few short weeks beheld him established in a village store, where his pleasant agreeable manners soon made numbers of friends and patrons. He had engaged an assistant, who was well acquainted with the people, and was again in that American Paradisiacal state of existence—making money. My mother and sisters

soon became acquainted with all the most respectable and pleasant people of the village, and surrounding country, and things went on swimmingly.

I had commenced school with the Englishman, Mr. Burten, and—as he was so good as to inform my father—was progressing finely.

CHAPTER XXI.

Five years had passed away very pleasantly in Millville, without anything of unusual interest occurring, and I had reached my seventeenth birthday. My father had prospered in business, but it took about all he made to keep up the family; and although he never ran in debt, yet the amount saved at the end of each year was not very large. He had, however, been able to purchase the house where we resided, and the forlorn ghost of poor Zebo, finding that we were not to be frightened from the premises, finally abandoned the place.

There was some debate about the reality of his visits to the house after we moved into it; and I must say that if he ever favored us with any midnight calls, that he was very careful to shut all the doors after him, and never to make any disturbing noises. In truth, I incline to doubt the whole story, and pronounce it a sad hoax.

I must now be guilty of a slight bit of egotism, to which censurable vice I am never addicted when it can possibly be avoided.

At seventeen I began to learn that I was a wondrously handsome fellow. My mirror, which I consulted every morning after rising, was candid and reflecting; and it plainly told me so. Young ladies whom I passed on the street whispered it to me through their eyes, and sometimes, when they thought I was beyond hearing, spoke it from their sweet, flattering lips. Old ladies, too, caressed my soft, peachy cheeks, which the roughness of a hairy excrescence had not yet defaced, and looked boldly down with the privilege of age and matronly experience into my dark, ever-changing eyes. "O, that

youth were indeed eternal, and beautiful, blooming boys could not degenerate into rough-bearded, heartless men!" I was not vain of my classic, oval face, nor of my almost faultless form, just ripening into the youthful plumpness and bloom of boyhood—nor of my dark auburn hair, clustering in natural, clinging curls—nor of my small feet and delicate, patrician hands. I *was not* proud of them; candidly do I say it, though I am aware no one will believe me. This marvellous personal beauty, in which God had enshrined my soul, estranged me from my associates; and as soon as I grew old enough to mingle much with companions of my own age, and frequently with persons much older, I became aware of this. If I went into a crowd of rude boys, the conversation was interrupted, and impudent stares met me if I made any conciliating remark. Whispers which they did not much trouble themselves to keep from my ears also wounded my self-respect.

"Just looks like a girl—got curly hair, and hands like a woman—can't throw like a boy!" and all such insulting remarks.

"I can fight like a boy, at any rate!" exclaimed I one day, as an envious, great ugly gawk of a fellow taunted me upon the play-ground with throwing a ball "just like a gal." And straightway I flew at the fellow, with my eyes blazing with anger, and was about to convince the school-boy "set" that if I did look like a girl, I was as bold and strong as any of them. But Mr. Burten appeared among us at the moment, on his way to the school-house, and turning upon me a calm, pleading glance of his melancholy eyes, called me gently to his side. Ashamed of my sudden anger, I calmed instantly, and followed him, for he had acquired a strange, magnetic power over me.

"I did not expect to be grieved by such a sight as I have just witnessed, my dear Edgar," observed he quietly, and with affectionate tenderness placing his hand upon my shoulder as we passed out of sight of the boys.

I could not reply for a moment; shame tied my tongue, and dashed the hot, red blood into my cheeks.

"They taunted me with being an effeminate girl, Mr. Burten, because I do not throw a ball just as they do."

"And is it such a shame—such an insult, to resemble a woman, my dear boy—to be like your noble mother and your sisters?"

I looked up into his calm, placid face, and sought to fathom his meaning by gazing into those large, sorrowful eyes, which always seemed to me like pebbled brooks—you thought you saw everything in them—that they concealed nothing—but when you attempted to fathom them they grew momentarily darker and deeper.

"Why do the boys taunt me with looking like a woman, and acting like one, if it isn't considered by them a shame?"

"But you really do not believe that it is—I know you do not, I see it in your eyes."

I looked down, and instead of trying to read my companion's thoughts, attempted the task of deciphering my own.

"To speak candidly, Mr. Burten, I do not consider the fact a shame, but it annoys and irritates me to think that they do. I know that I only resemble woman—if at all—in her most admired characteristics."

"There may come a time, my dear boy, when, to say one resembles a woman, will not be understood as equivalent to everything that is physically and very often mentally effeminate. There is an age approaching—and you will live to see it—when woman shall be physically and nobly developed, as the Great Creator intended her to be—an age when wasp-waisted ladies, whose diet has been morbid, sickly sentiment—not true sentiment, for there is a great distinction—will faint and fall in the strife of life, and be elbowed aside by their sisters, who being taught that it is not unlady-like to romp and play as girls, in fresh, pure air, will be strong as women without ceasing to be beautiful. They may not be quite so etherial and evanescently lovely, nor possess waists that may be clasped with the span of a hand, (and Death too often circles them in his fleshless fingers,) but still, in all the developments of glorious Beauty, which combine to chain the beholder to the pedestal of the

.edecian Venus, they will be unapproachable. And think you that woman's soul will not perfect and grow stronger with the casket which encloses it? Man denies both high physical and high mental culture to his helpmate, and then prates vapidly about the inferiority of woman. Noble consistency! Admirable reasoning."

"There are women who contend that it would unsex them to bring them up as you describe," suggested I, interrupting him.

(Mr. Burten, scornfully) "Unsex them! such creatures have no sex, and consequently cannot be deprived of what they do not possess. You never heard your mother make such a remark as that, Edgar.—No.—It is only the class I have alluded to—silly, senseless butterflies—fit playthings for some whiskered sensual animal, only superior to them in animal power, who, after gratifying his grovelling appetites, tosses them aside as a child tosses a china doll, and they are broken quite as easily, both mentally and physically. Look at your own sisters for instance, Edgar, and compare them with the girls of the village. Are they any the less beautiful or less graceful because they can walk three miles before breakfast without fainting? I may speak of them without offending you, for these protect me." And he touched his slightly gray hairs with his fingers apologetically. "They can brush away a spider without starting with a silly scream, but are their feelings less exquisitely refined and sensitive! They can engage in some more useful and noble occupation than working worsted shepherdesses and woolly-headed sheep upon pastures and hill-sides of unmitigated verdancy. But are they any the less lady-like? Assuredly not. The age is buried with the dead past, when woman knew no higher or more ennobling occupation than darning antiquated samplers and stitching useless embroderies."

"You are passing the school-house door, Mr. Burten," said I, "shall we not stop?"

"Ah, I had forgotten. Yes, we will go in."

"After tea, the same evening, Mr. Burten called for me to take a walk with him. Our residence was in the suburbs of the village,

and rather detached from the more closely built portion of the place. My teacher came up to the little gate, and with his elbows resting upon it, called me as I sat beneath the old elm-tree, deeply absorbed in the Paradise Lost, which I was just then reading, for the first time. My mother sat at the open window near by, stitching a collar for me, and Fanny upon a low stool at her feet, was reading aloud. Her soft, musical voice came to me, ever and anon, threading the majestic cadences of Milton with its rippling flow, as it sometimes seemed, burderned with mirth, and then like a cloud, surcharged with summer lightning, flashed forth in laughter, in which my mother joined. And as the laughter floated away into the cluster ing wild roses, her voice, tremulous with unshed tears, murmuringly hushed in silence.

"Edgar," called Mr. Burten, after standing awhile. "Edgar, close your book, it is getting too dim to see distinctly. Will you not come with me for a twilight stroll?" And he touched his hat with graceful deference to my mother, who had looked up—hearing his voice.

"A charming evening, Mr. Burten, will you not come in?"

"I had purposed taking a stroll in the woods before the twilight fades away, if I can prevail upon Edgar to accompany me."

"In a moment, Mr. Burten, I have just entered the garden of Eden, but the light grows dim—I cannot penetrate farther. Here, mother," and I extended the book through the window.

'I also once entered the garden of Eden through the portals of 'sweet seventeen,'" observed Mr. Burten, abstractedly, after we had passed out at the gate, and were sauntering along the turnpike towards the green woods. "I entered, but my fate, like the angel with the flaming sword, drove me relentlessly out forever."

"We walked slowly on. I did not ask him to explain, but intuitively comprehended that my companion had suffered some vague, corroding sorrow, the remembrance of which, like a dark cloud, shadowed all the after years of his life. I would not intrude into those shadows, for the precincts were sacred, and to him, perchance, holy ground

We had reached the woods, and through the vistas could catch far-away glimpses of the gorgeously-tinted clouds, and see the colors fade from them as the sun sunk in the western horizon, and grey twilight hung fantastic draperies on the trees. The fire-flies came flitting from out the dark, luxuriant foliage, and the sounds of busy life were hushed into a low, confused murmur, as they floated to our ears. Mr. Burten did not make any further remarks upon the subject, and I—although feeling some curiosity—did not advance any (what I thought might be) impertinent inquiries."

"You start for college in a few days, I believe, Edgar?"

"Yes, sir, in ten days, if I can finish my preparations."

We could now hear the distant sound of the river breaking over the rocks of its shallow bed, and rushing away in what was called "the riffle."

"We must have walked fast, Mr. Burten, here is the river."

My companion seemed to think that I was wishing to change the subject of conversation, if the few words we had exchanged could be so termed. He looked into my face as we stopped upon a high bluff, overlooking the broad expanse of the stream, which was here covered with white foam by its dashings over the rocks.

"Do you regret leaving home, Edgar?"

"Extremely, sir, I feel a regret—yes, something more than regret—even a sorrow at leaving my mother and my sisters, for I have never before been separated, for any length of time, from them. It may be womanly, and I dare say my school-fellows would term it so, but to you I may acknowledge it without fear of ridicule."

"Yes, my dear boy, I appreciate and understand your feelings," answered Mr. Burten.

"I have even wept at the anticipation of the parting; but yet this is not all—with the sorrow is mingled another feeling."

"I listen," said my companion, tossing a stone carelessly over the bluff into the water, "speak on, Edgar."

"A dim, undefinable dread, which has not yet shaped itself into a presentiment of coming evil, but yet grows daily upon me, and,

like the cloud which the prophet saw from Mount Carmel, gathers darkly upon the horizon of my soul. If 'coming events' do, indeed, 'cast their shadows before,' I have even been within this shadow, for I awoke this morning, and as I opened my eyes in the cheery sunshine, I felt it slowly float away—but it left a chill, from which the July sunshine cannot altogether free me.

"You are too sensitive and nervous, my dear boy. Drive such forebodings away. At seventeen one should be ceaselessly happy. It grows darker, and the night dews are falling—let us return"

"Well," said I, and we turned from the river."

"What a romantic place in which to drown oneself!" exclaimed my companion, laughing, and taking my arm as we walked away from the eminence. I looked at him strangely, but did not speak. We had almost passed through the woods—which were not very extensive, an were walking in silence beneath a gnarled oak tree of venerable appearance. Neither of us had spoken for some time, when suddenly an owl flew out of th overhanging branches with a dismally discordant shriek, and flapping its large wings almost in our faces, disappeared in th darkness of he twilight. It saddened me almost to gloom.

We reached the little gate of my home, and Mr. Burten pressed my hand as he kindly murmured "Good night."

CHAPTER XXII.

A MONTH had passed since my conversation with Mr. Burten, and I had not yet left home for college. A month had passed, and my father had been taken ill. The physician at first thought the attack merely a slight indisposition but through bad treatment or carelessness, he grew gradually worse, and was now confined to his bed.

Nor did he seem to be recovering very rapidly; for although the doctor told us that he thought the patient would soon be walking about as usual, my mother shook her head sadly, as though she feared the anticipation would never be realized

Instead of going to college, I was necessarily compelled to remain at home, and give the greater portion of my time to the business of the store when not engaged in my father's sick room. When he was first attacked he slept well, and did not require any one to sit up with him; but now this was indispensible, and my mother or some of the neighbors watched in his chamber through the long night. Helen sat up with him very often, as he seemed to feel a pleasure in seeing her about the room, and feeling her soft hand upon his fevered forehead.

How changed he was! How different from the robust man of a few short weeks before! His hair, once a soft, rich black, had turned slightly grey, and his cheek was sunken, pale and emaciated. His voice had lost its sonorous tones of feeling and gladness, and was now tremulous and affectingly sad.

It was upon a Friday evening I well remember. I had now learned to stand behind the counter and sell goods also, and was

just about to leave the store and start home upon this evening, when a lady entered.

The gentleman whom my father had engaged as an assistant, was at the time busily engaged drawing off an account for some one. I could not ask him to wait upon the lady, so I removed my hat walked behind the counter again, and attempted to smile as I politely inquired what she would look at.

"Some dress silks, if you please, Mr. Trevor."

Taking them out of the drawer where they were kept, I commenced to show them to her. A rich watered piece pleased her "very much—very much indeed." But the color was not *exactly* such as she wished; a shade—only a shade too dark. "Had I no other?"

Yes, I thought we had. "Mr. Brown, was there not another piece of silk near the color of this?" I inquired.

"Yes, O yes—you'll find it in the next drawer."

"Ah! here it is. This is a lovely silk, madame—the exact shade you want, I fancy." And I took it from the paper mechanically—for I was thinking of a far different and sadder subject—and gathering the glossy folds in my hands, held them up in the fast fading light. "Is it not beautiful? and only a dollar and a half a yard!"

"Well, Mr. Trevor—excuse me for not calling you Edgar, but you have grown so much that it looks rather familiar to call a young man by his first name."

I bowed slightly.

"But as I was going to say," continued the lady, "I am very hard to please in silks."

"Yes," said I mentally, "I do not remember of ever seeing you wear one;" and then observed aloud, "Ah!"

"Yes, indeed, very hard to please! That comes near the shade I had intended getting, but yet"—and she stopped and smiled in a most fascinating manner, for she had very pretty teeth—"it really does not fill my eye exactly. Pray hold it up again, if it is not *too* much trouble."

She stepped back a pace or two, and throwing her head slightly

aside, like a connoisseur viewing an old picture, murmured,—" No, not exactly."

I was sorry it did not please her—very, indeed. At least I said so.

"Possibly I may take it, Mr. Trevor, if I do not find any to suit me better," said she, pausing at the door. "If I conclude to do so, I will call again in the morning."

I folded the silks and put them again in the drawer, well knowing that she had not the slightest intention of doing any such thing.

"Your mother wants you, massa Edgar," exclaimed Felix, entering as the lady went out. There was alarm in the tone of his voice—there was alarm in his countenance—and I hastily left the store, for I comprehended the cause of that alarm, without asking any questions at such a moment.

My mother met me at the front door, and I could see in the twilight the traces of tears. She kissed me in silence, and drew me into my father's chamber. He had been anxiously asking if I had returned, and had called me several times, as though his thoughts were wandering.

I went up to the bed-side.

"Papa!" murmured I softly, for I still called him by that familiar name, dear to my boyhood. His eyelids drooped, as though he were sleeping. Helen sat at the bed with a large fan, cooling the sultry air.

He unclosed his eyes painfully, and looked up. He had wished me to read to him, and told my sister to get the Bible, and turn to a particular passage. Seating myself, I did so, and with an effort commanded my voice and pressed back my tears in reading the inspired volume.

When I had ceased, I looked up, and his eyes were again closed, and his lips murmuring a prayer. The trace of pain had passed away, and a calm smile beamed from his countenance My mother told me he was more quiet, and appeared to suffer less than he had

done for several days. The physician thought his symptoms more favorable. I lingered at the bed-side a few moments longer, talking to my father, but it seemed to be an effort for him to speak, and my mother motioned me away. I went into the supper room, and she followed me.

"Your father is not long for this world, Edgar!" said she, sobbingly.

I had felt the truth of this myself, but to have the thought clothed in words, and spoken when I had not yet dared to whisper it to myself, startled me. Still had I hoped, although knowing hope was vain; but yet I clung to it, and would not see the awful truth looming from out the future. My mother's remark tore away the thin veil with which I had been covering my eyes, and the Death angel's black pinions beat the air before me. I grew sick at heart, and a strange dizziness affected my head as I mechanically took a seat at the table.

But I could not eat, my throat was full of sorrow.

Returning to the sick room, to which my mother had preceded me, I found my father still gently slumbering.

We watched him a long time in silence, then my sister ceased to use the fan, and bowed her head upon her bosom, but her eyes were tearless. The great withering sorrow had dried up the fountain of tears, as the burning sirocco dries up the springs of the desert.

My mother sat in a distant corner, in the shadow of the lamplight, pale and frightfully still. Not a sound broke the strange stillness of the room, save my father's labored breathing.

A low, stifled sob roused me as I sat by the window gazing at the flickering lamp, and then the door slowly opened, and Bel and Fanny came softly in.

My father heard the noise, and opened his eyes, as he murmured in a faint voice, "water."

My mother arose instantly to give it to him, and we all gathered around the bed. Helen asked him if he felt any pain.

"None whatever." He then sunk back upon the pillow, and again seemed to sleep.

About ten o'clock, the physician and Mr. Burten called, and my father roused himself, and commenced talking to them. Presently the minister also came in, and they had a long conversation upon religious subjects. My father requested him to pray as he was about to leave the room, and we all kneeled. It seemed to me that I had never before been so near to God—so close to Heaven—as upon that night.

After prayer, my father appeared calmer, and spoke to us all with something of his old tenderness and affectionateness of manner. We thought him a great deal better.

The physician evidently considered his symptoms more favorable, and we separated about eleven o'clock.

My mother and Helen were to watch with him until midnight, and then Mr. Burten and I were to relieve them. My sisters and myself kissed him, and fondly bade him good night, as we left the room. He replied to us affectionately, as though in his usual health.

I threw myself upon my bed without undressing, and tried to sleep until my mother should call me.

The little clock upon the mantle ticked sadly, and struck eleven as I entered, looped aside the curtain from the window, and looked out. Every object to me wore a spectral, unearthly appearance, but nothing in nature was changed; I was only surrounded by a different atmospheric medium, and all things were gloomed by its sombre hues.

I slept, or seemed to sleep, and my soul wandered in mountainous lands of dreams.

Toiling footsore and wearily along a rocky pathway, a bird, an unknown, hideous terror, with an appalling cry flew out of the black clouds which seemed forever resting about the peaks of the towering mountains, fastened upon my heart, and commenced devouring it. I could not raise my arm to stay it—I could not rush

away from it. My heart, like that of the chained Prometheus grew again as it was devoured. It was a ceaseless agony.

The clock struck twelve. I shuddered and awoke with the cold sweat upon my temples. The candle which I had left burning, was flickering in the socket—the pendulum ceased its vibrations, for the clock had run down.

A mysterious rustling wind seemed to blow through all the house, moving the curtains of the windows, and the draperies of the bed. My mother entered the room in ghastly terror.

"Come, Edgar, come quickly."

I knew it—I felt it—my father was dying! When I reached the room, my sisters were kneeling about the bed, moaning and sobbing piteously. The minister kneeled in prayer. My father, supported by pillows in a recumbent attitude, with clasped hands, looked fervently heavenward. His eyes reflected the light of another world, for the soul looking through them for the last time, exulted in its flight.

"My Edgar, my only son."

I kneeled, with my head resting upon the bed. "My father, O my father!" He laid his hand upon my temple and blessed me, then sunk back upon the pillow in exhaustion. Helen held his other hand drooping upon the bed cover. My mother threw herself wildly beside me, and grasped the cold fingers, which yet rested upon my head. The clasp was gently, gently returned. The breath came painfully and in long gasps. My father gave a convulsive start, quivered like an aspen, and then calmed into stillness—he was dead!

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CHAPTER XXIII.

I COULD not now go to college. The idea had been abandoned, and although regretting it, I felt too great an affection for my mother and sisters to ever mention the subject in their presence.

Life flowed sluggishly along after my father's death. There was a gloom upon everything. The room where he had died seemed ever haunted by his pale face, and every breath of wind that drifted through the open window, was permeated with his sad, plaintive tones. My mother grew thin and pale, and her face bloodless and thoughtful, was increased in sorrowfulness by the sable robes of widowhood. Now it was that I became more than ever impressed with the bitterness of the truth, that there was a strange unknown (to me, at least,) something about me that chilled people. Young persons of my own sex, had scarcely any sympathy in common with me, and we found little pleasure in each others society. Indeed, instead of finding pleasure in the companionship, both I and they instinctively felt that it was irksome and—not to withhold the word which more than any other, expresses the meaning I wish to impart—that the intercourse was a decided bore.

I found no one among the youth of the village, with whom I could talk upon topics which to me were most interesting—viz: literary subjects, books, and authors. We felt that there was some invisible barrier to a free intercourse. I tried to overcome this, and sought to engage in conversation upon topics which I knew would be of most interest to them, for it was my object to cultivate popularity. But they seemed to see that I was acting a part, and what was worse for me, to penetrate my disguise—to push aside my mask, and look under it.

I had never associated much with females, except my own sisters, and although I was eighteen—that age when youth usually seek the society of ladies—I felt no urgent impulsiveness to cultivate a further intercourse. Therefore I courted the society of older persons, men my seniors by ten and often twenty years. But this, though satisfying my intellectual longing to a certain extent, did not entirely fulfill my desire. We did not view objects in the same light at all, and my newness and spring-like spontauiety of feeling, found no respondent sympathy in their hearts.

They had doubtless experienced the same sensation themselves, but now the changes in the physical system, and contact with the world, had evaporated this evanescence.

So, again, I was disappointed. The kind of a friend I wished, was one about my own age, and of a peculiar physical and mental conformation. He must be good looking, but not necessarily handsome, before there could be any animal magnetism or sympathy between us. I could find such persons in the village—young boys yet, like myself—in their teens, who had a strange power over my animal nature, so much so, in fact, that they affected me with an electric thrill of voluptuous responsiveness, whenever they touched me with their hands, or any part of their skin came in contact with mine. Whether I moved them in the same manner, I never could know, for I was too sensitively proud to ask them.

But then, intellectually there was none of this sympathetic affinity between us. I felt it, I knew it, and when the truth flashed upon my perception, I always experienced a sickening languor of disappointment which was quickly succeeded by infinite disgust and contempt. I felt my own intellectual superiority exquisitely, but animally, was sympathetically attracted to them, and whenever I for a time forgot the distinction, and approached, I was invariably repulsed by my own mental individuality.

I do not know if other young persons have experienced this feeling which I have attempted to explain, not having conversed with any one upon the subject, but presume that people of peculiar nervous imaginative temperaments have.

My voiceless and continually disappointed longing for a friend and companion—for we would be impelled like two bodies charged with the same electrical sympathy to approach each other and be forever bosom, (no, not bosom, that is a hacknied expression, and does not convey my meaning,) but heart and soul friends—typical of both animal and intellectual sympathy. And this was what I sought and longed for with a lingeringness of hope which was not then satisfied. In after years it was. Not, however, after losing the freshfulness and sensitive responsiveness of youthful feeling. Ah, no, it would not have been a pleasure then. It would have enkindled somewhat of the same feeling that the fallen arch angel, I fancy, experienced as he fell down, down through a depthless, abyssmal, profound of chaos, and saw the glittering parapets of heaven disappear from sight.

I perchance too much intensify this feeling, but it must be intensified in order to be comprehended.

People said that I had not "business" qualifications—that I could not "drive a good bargain," and sell staple and fancy dry goods to a profitable advantageousness. Of course I heard this, for there are always plenty of tale bearers and petty tattlers about a village, to bear such small intelligence free of charge, and the remarks stung me in an exposed part.

I determined to disprove them by actions, for words could not do it. Centering my ambition upon the petty details of a petty business, I marshalled all my available forces in a most military manner, and in a business way took an inventory of them.

But the custom—unaccountably to me—slowly left the store, notwithstanding even the presence of Mr. Brown. Some of my father's old friends, it is true, still purchased their goods from us, but the transient or floating custom gradually drifted away.

"What is the reason, my dear Edgar, that you and Mr. Brown do not sell as much as your father formerly did?" said my mother to me.

I told her that I really did not know, that it was unaccountable. Possibly it might be owing to *my* presence.

"To *your* presence, my dear boy. How can that be. You, whose manners are so soft and gentle, cannot have been the cause of so many ceasing to buy from their old favorite business house. It must surely be in the goods—would it not be advisable to send and get a new stock from Philadelphia?"

"The goods are all in the newest fashion, and we sell them as low as others," I replied, ready almost to call the people a set of ignorant fools, who did not know their own interests.

"It is certainly very strange," said my mother, sighing. "If the income from the store does not increase we must be compelled to close it and sell off the goods. I shall economize in the household expenditures at any rate without further delay."

"But perhaps it does not suit your taste, Edgar? I always thought I detected a scarcely perceptible repugnance, if I may so term it—which you never expressed in words or even in your actions—but yet I felt it to be such. And you are so young, the confinement is irksome perhaps."

"My dear mother, you astonish me," replied I, evading a direct answer, and striving to equivocate even with her—for I could not acknowledge the bitter truth, "have I done anything which could lead you to form such an opinion? What else could I do, in fact, to earn a support?"

"Study for a profession," my son, suggested my mother kindly, but then as soon as she had uttered the words the thought seemed to occur to her that this even, in our present circumstances, was not possible.

"I detest the professions—medicine and surgery I have no talent nor taste for—the law, with its trickery and contemptible chicanery, I abhor, and, at any rate, I have not 'brass' and impudence sufficient for an attorney. Divinity is too holy for me to think of. Besides, a minister of the Gospel should feel, in his own soul, that he is called of God, and not set out to peddle the sacred word as a matter of trade and business, which will afford him a living."

My mother did not attempt to combat any of my views, but observed, that she thought it strange I should have a distaste for the medical profession. It had always appeared to her that there was something sacred and apostolic in the duty of going about waiting upon the sick, relieving the ills and harrowing pains of poor, suffering humanity, and with God's blessing, restoring health to the drooping invalid.

The subject was not farther discussed at that time, and I left the room.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SOMETIME after this last conversation with my mother, I was wandering out a short distance from the village, upon a lonely romantic lane. The road, after leaving the village, swept around the side of a neighboring hill, and then pursued a serpentine course along the wild, steep banks of the river. It was a favorite walk of mine, for it was solitary and secluded, and besides these recommendations, commanded numerous far-stretching glimpses of river scenery.

I had been walking slowly, after leaving the outskirts of the village, stopping occasionally to admire some particularly fine effect, and then again sauntering along, brooding in sad regretfulness over the annoyances and embarrassments which, even at the age of eighteen, I had felt that this life contained.

My last conversation with my mother occurred to me, and I keenly felt an accusing restlessness brooding over me like a dark mist, and moving forever before my eyes, for the deception I had been guilty of with my only parent. It hung as the drapery of drooping moss hangs upon the forest trees of the southern woods, and floated even over the purpling hills, fading amid the splendorings of the summer sunset.

"And is life to be but one long funeral train, with black-plumed hearses forever passing before me, with the corpses of my dead joys and coffined hopes!" I murmured, pausing a moment to gaze far down into the foaming, wild, rushing river. Starting, I looked up, as my ear caught the distant sounds of wild and luscious laughter, which came floating through the vistas of the wood and rippling over the tremulous leaves of the trees.

I listened wonderingly, for the laughter was that of girls, buoyant up-bubblings from hearts surcharged with joyousness. The sounds floated nearer, and then I heard the faint, falling tread of hastening footsteps. Then the laughter ceased, and as the faint echoes lost themselves in the forest, a succession of screams of terror roused me from my dreaming. I dashed onward to that part of the wood from whence the noises seemed to proceed. Quickly arriving at the place I found a party of young girls, between the ages of twelve and sixteen, flying in dismay before an angry cow. I thought, at the first glance, they were *all* running, and could scarce forbear laughing at the ludicrous appearance they presented, but looking more attentively as I came up, perceived that the five retreating ones had halted as they saw me approaching, and that a tall, dark-eyed girl had turned upon the enraged cow, and advancing upon her pursuer with a broken branch of a tree, was boldly driving the animal back, amidst the cheers of her less courageous companions. These seeing the cow now in slow retreat, commenced gathering broken limbs and sticks to assist in the pursuit.

They were school-girls from the village, who had been out gathering flowers, and I found that they were all known to me, except the tall, dark-eyed one, who had first turned upon the cow.

"Ah, here comes Ed. Trevor," shouted some one. "He'll drive the old huzzy off—won't you, Edgar?"

"Surely I will. But tell me who is that girl with the straw hat, leading the attack."

"Why, don't you know who that is? Ah, Master Trevor, you are only trying to deceive us!" cried the eldest of the party, peering laughingly into my eyes.

"Upon my honor I am not! See! here she comes. How very beautiful! with her curls waving, and her eyes flashing with excitement. Introduce me, Kate!" and I turned to my girlish companion, who was smiling archly at my enthusiasm.

The young lady came up to where we were standing, and being upon one side of the road, in rather a retired situation, she did not

observe me until my companion spoke. Surprised and slightly embarrassed, she drew back as my friend called her.

"Mr. Edgar Trevor, Miss Belmont. I hope you'll get better acquainted than you are now;" and with this she ran away from us, laughing mischievously.

We bowed, smilingly, in each others faces. She appeared to be about seventeen, and was just ripening into the perfect development of womanhood. A slightly dark, but clear and transparent skin, in which the blue veins faintly wandered—jetty ringlets, combless and unconfined, dancing about her neck, bare to the shoulders—regular, but not cold, Grecian features, and such gloriously dark eyes, as never young poet saw in most enraptured visions.

She would not have been beautiful but for those eyes. Her swan-like neck might have borne the stately head, and the jetty curls danced as gracefully to every breeze, and all her other perfections might have inspired admiration, as does some marble statue. This admiration would never have been warmed into love, however, but for those warm, panting, passion-breathing eyes. They conquered me, and my soul, ardor-burning, worshiped at her feet. To speak were to break the spell; but speech was the herald whereby our beleaguered souls should hold parley with each other.

"Miss Belmont must be a stranger here," said I, raising my eyes to hers after we had bowed.

She was arranging the wild flowers, which she had gathered, into a bouquet, and looked up as I spoke.

"Yes," answered she in a tone of scarcely perceptible sadness; "I arrived at the village but two days ago, from my home in the South."

"What sorrow to leave such happiness behind to come so far!"

"But every one must have their sorrows; they are the dark threads woven in to strengthen the web of life," replied the young girl.

I looked at her in astonishment.

She perceived it, and imagined, doubtless, that she was not un-

derstood. I felt humbled to think that she should for a moment harbor such a thought of me.

"But in some long-woven lives the threads are all bright and golden, and in others all dark. There is no contrasting variety;" and my inquiring gaze met hers.

She returned it, and her luminous eyes assumed a cordial, sympathetic gleam, as though she had just found appreciation and responsive feeling long eagerly sought for. I translated the expression, and treasured it in my yearning heart.

Our conversation was here interrupted by the return of the other girls, and Miss Belmont commenced plucking and despoiling her flowers of their luxuriant leaves.

"You had better be running home instead of standing here in the twilight talking love," said my friend Kate, as she glanced mischievously at me.

"What?" asked I in astonishment.

A merry, provoking laugh was the only answer I received to this interrogatory, and her companions all joined Kate in her merriment. Miss Belmont appeared a little annoyed, but tied on her straw hat as I moved forward to accompany her.

"Come on, Cora Belmont, come on, and bring your handsome beau with you; we'll not eat him!" And the gay party skipped away like a bevy of Scottish fairies, tripping it in the moonlight.

We did come on, and succeeded in keeping pace with the girlish set as they romped, and ran chasing each other back and forth around us.

"How brave you were to turn and pursue the cow, all alone!"

"Ah, you are speaking ironically, Mr. Trevor, I see it in your eyes. Did you not think me a sad romp when you first came up and saw me defying the angry creature? It did not look very lady-like." And she laughed musically, and plucked her bouquet.

"Upon my word, I thought it noble and womanly, and could scarce refrain from making sport of the other girls for their silly, cowardly flight. They doubtless imagined it looked feminine to

get frightened at a cow; but I must say that it appeared to me exceedingly childish."

"Many of them are brought up in such a way that they are always afraid of acting like a boy, for fear it should seem masculine."

The rest of the party had walked on before us, and were now beyond hearing.

"Yes, indeed, that is too true, Miss Belmont. From earliest childhood the little girl is daily cautioned against doing anything like a boy. Should she, in the exuberance of her joy, run and leap and jump, or climb fences and tear her clothes, she is freezingly rebuked when she returns home, and oftentimes punished."

"'You should not do such things, my daughter,' says her delicate mamma.

"'But brother mounts fences, and runs, and plays ball, and climbs trees, too,' urges the little girl.

"'Certainly,' answers mamma, gasping for breath, as she bends forward to lift a chair, 'but he is a boy, my daughter, and it is right for him to do these things.'

"And so the proud, high-spirited little girl is sent away to mope in a corner and stitch doll rags, while her robust brother dashes through the meadow after his ball, rolls in happiness upon the sweet-smelling grass, and breathes the pure air of health. Can it be a matter of wonder that there is such a difference in the physical structure of the sexes?"

The young girl laughed at my enthusiasm.

"Why, Mr. Trevor, you are a perfect woman's rights man. Where in the world did you imbibe all your heretical opinions?"

"Some of them from my mother; others I acquired by observation. I'll wager a pair of gloves that you were not brought up like the cocoon of a silkworm, if your parents were wealthy; and I presume they were, from the smallness and delicacy of your hands."

"No, no," said she, laughing again so musically, that I foolishly wished she would always laugh.

"I was allowed to run and romp as much as I pleased—in fact, I was taught to take all kinds of exercise, for my guardian did not approve of cooping girls up in a room with rag dolls, and other foolish playthings. I used to play ball, too," she added, looking at me slily, to see how the information would be received.

"Bravo!" exclaimed I heartily.

"And I also learned to row a boat, and to ride and walk, too, until I could dash off two or three miles before breakfast, and never feel the effects of it, except in an increased appetite."

"And a brighter rosiness of your cheeks," I added, finishing the sentence. "Better and better, my mother would be delighted with you. She is always laughing at the ridiculous delicacy and effeminacy of the American women, and contrasting them with the higher classes in England and Scotland.

"I must admit that we suffer by the contrast," answered my beautiful companion, in a deprecating tone. "Is your mother an English lady?"

"No, Scottish by birth, the grand-daughter of Lord Balcour."

I was proud of the patrician descent, and was curious to see how the information would affect my young acquaintance.

"Ah!" she ejaculated, opening her fine eyes as though astonished. "So you can boast of a line of noble ancestors. How proud you should be."

"What! with more blood in my veins than money in my pocket," rejoined I with bitterness. "Pride and poverty is a Scottish inheritance."

Miss Belmont smiled, and muttered something about wealth being so easily acquired and being altogether adventitious.

"Teach me to acquire—quick—quick, fair lady."

"Go to wiser heads than mine for the philosopher's stone, Mr. Trevor, and obey the scriptural injunction. Do you know that?"

"Yes, yes, do not repeat it."

Miss Belmont stopped at the gate of a widow lady in easy circumstances, at whose house she had told me she was boarding. It

was not very far from my own home, and I often wondered afterwards how she could have been there two long days and I not have known it.

"We part here, do we not?"

"Yes, for the present," replied the young girl in low, musical tones."

"How did it occur that you should think of coming to Millville to school, Miss Belmont?"

"I have a relative here, and he suggested it to my guardian.'

"Indeed," observed I eagerly, "may I ask who is this relative?"

"Mr. Burten, you know him I presume?"

"Well—and love him dearly. He was my teacher, and most valued friend. But he is absent."

"Temporarily, he will return again."

"Good evening," she added, with soft-voiced tenderness, "they will expect me to tea," and opening the little gate, she went in.

"Will you give me a rose from your bouquet, as a memento of this pleasant evening?"

She looked curiously at me, to see if I was jesting, and then seeming satisfied that I was not, bent over the flowers and selected one just unfolding.

"Good bye," and she ran up the gravel walk, and I stood lingering at the gate. She paused a moment at the open door, and looked back.

"Good bye, and may the angels guard you," I fondly murmured. She bowed and smiled—her white dress fluttered at the door—and she was gone.

CHAPTER XXV.

I WENT to bed early that night, but lay long awake, musing over the vision of the starry-eyed creature I had met. Was a golden thread being woven by the Divine hand in the web of my life, and should happiness, holy and serene, soothe me into contentment and quiet calm?

I must not be happy—I dare not whilst my poor mother is so lonely and sad in her sorrow. How melancholy was her glance, as I came in this evening, and how her eyes followed me as I moved about. She must have been thinking of me, and wearying herself with vague, undefined dreads.

And the future rises as some barren and boundless prairie before the lost and footsore western pioneer. There may be shady groves, and gushing springs beyond those stretches of unknown miles that fade away behind the purpling mist of the horizon. But he cannot know—he may only hope and abandon his footsteps to the guidance of that far-seeing Eye which sweeps beyond the starry firmaments.

The future may have much happiness in store for us all, but we must still grope patiently in the mists of the present. What if I should love this Miss Belmont? and I could love her, for I feel even now within my soul, a passionate, yearning love rising and leaping beneath her panting eyes, as the tides of the ocean uprise to the round moon that rides above them in her splendoring glory. "But should she chill you back with her glittering coldness?"

My love would flow out like the tides, but to rush in again whenever I came within the influence of her attraction. And perchance

she might return my yearning love. Oh, such bliss were worth a life below to gain, for at death, should we not clasp each other in one long unending embrace, and float through the ether and love plume our drooping pinions to some distant star!

What is the love of mere earth-creatures, with all their capacities for enjoying and understanding, and acquiring, dwarfed to this bodily insignificance, compared to the wide sweeping powers and boundless yearnings of the immortals!

"I wonder if Miss Belmont is wealthy," murmured I, bringing my thoughts down from their vain-glorious soarings amidst the stars, to the more palpable realities of earth. This chimera of marrying for love and working for money, is antiquated nonsense. I for one, will have none of such philosophy.

Then I commenced castle building.

I would pay my devoirs to Cora, (such was her soft, sweet name,) and she having nothing else to do in the secluded little village, would love me in return. Then would come long delightful walks in the calm quiet moonlight, by the romantic banks of the river. Then the proposal—the marriage—the honeymoon, the intoxicating, voluptuous joy-laden days and nights, which should be spent at Niagara, or some other delightful retreat. When the cold winter came on we would flit away to the south, like gay summer birds, and in that balmy clime, surrounded with all the luxuries of the most refined civilization, the dreamy days should roll noiselessly away, like idle clouds in the summer sky. Books and music, and songs, gushing like rills from her ripe lips, would drive away monotony, and when the evening shades came on, the luxurious chair lined with purple velvet, would be wheeled beneath the silver lamp, suspended like a star from the domed ceiling.

My dark eyed Cora would seat herself, while I, upon a low silken cushion, lay pillowed on her lap. She would read from some grand poem where clanging trumpet-like passages sweep over the soul, as the winds among the harp-like pines, stirring them to wild diapasons of melodious grandeur. Then the delicious episodes,

where the poet sings of love, the starry-eyed cherub floating through enchanted gardens, and dim lighted Edens of unrifled sweets—. And then I fell asleep.

When I awoke in the morning, the rain sifted through the dull leaden clouds. Dismal fogs swept up from the rainy river, bearing moisture through all the house. Rain saturated the earth, and lay thick upon the bowed grass and shrubberies, as the wailing winds wandered among the mists.

How melancholy and dreary everything looked, as I came down to breakfast, and warmed my chilled fingers at the fire.

CHAPTER XXVI.

It was a week before I again saw Cora Belmont, and then we met on the street. There were a great many loungers sitting about the place, as there always are, in small, country towns in Kentucky, and I could only bow as she passed, and gave me a smile and a glance of her splendid dark eyes.

That glance was enough, however, to raise my blood to fever heat, and turn my brain for the remainder of the day.

Shortly after this I walked out past the house where Cora lived, and saw her standing in the door, with her straw-hat in her hand, and the same spotless white dress which she had worn at our first meeting.

Exquisitely beautiful she looked in it—nothing, I thought, could have become her better. I almost dreaded to approach, for fear she might think it an intrusion. Perhaps she was going somewhere and did not wish company.

"You were going out, Miss Belmont?" I enquired with a slight hesitation.

"Yes, to take a walk by the river-road—if the way prove clear of cows—I was just waiting for a friend."

"May I not supply the place of that friend?"

A momentary hesitancy seemed to possess her, and then she answered, "Perhaps you may, Mr. Trevor—Phillis, if Mr. Burten comes, inform him I am out walking with Mr. Trevor."

"Yes'm—I will, Miss Cory."

I had intended to say so much and wished to talk so fluently, but after we had started I could think of nothing. The young girl ap

peared also embarrassed and reserved, and we had walked on for some distance, and were out of the village, before either of us spoke.

"So Mr. Burten was to accompany you in your stroll?"

"Yes, I asked him—perhaps he may follow us."

I sincerely hoped he would not, and then remarked, "Possibly—it is a favorite walk of his. Ah! how I shall regret to leave the village and all its beautiful and romantic scenery."

"And do you really intend leaving?" enquired Miss Belmont. And then, as though ashamed of the interest she had expressed in her tone, she colored slightly and commenced toying with her fan.

"I fear so." And my glance turned in melancholy tenderness towards the river, which we were approaching.

The dreamy murmur of its waters, dashing over the rocks as it swept around a curve, arose to our ears. We paused and hushed our voices—then looked into each others eyes.

Aged trees overshadowed us and soft turf grew about their trunks. The sun had not yet sunk to his rest, and his rays, broken by the green foliage, fell in golden flecks through the trees. Cora withdrew her glance and gazed over the brink into the river.

"And will your mother and sisters leave the village, Edg—Mr. Trevor, I mean?"

"O, do call me Edgar. Don't fear to speak it, and I'll call you Cora."

I approached her. She drew back hastily, but with seeming reluctance.

"Do I offend you, Cora—Miss Belmont, I should say?"

"Remember our acquaintance is so short. This is but the second time we have met."

She appeared pained and wounded as she spoke, and I was equally hurt, for I did not know how to act or what to say. We were both so young and knew so little of the ways of the world.

"I did not intend to wound your feelings, Miss—Cora. Pardon and forgive me, I am but a boy—a passionate and wayward boy."

"My voice, in spite of all my efforts to control it, again trembled with tenderness as I approached her and extended my hand.

She closed her fan with a nervous gesture—started a step forward, as though to spring toward me in her magnanimous nobleness—then hesitated and gave me her hand.

"And when do you start, Edgar?"

"I cannot tell, exactly, but probably in a few weeks."

"And where to?" she asked, moving away, as though she wished to resume the walk. I followed, and we strolled down the road.

"To the West, Cora. I can do nothing here, few like me—I am unpopular with almost every one. I should be the support of my mother and sisters, and now am but an incubus. I have tried in every manner to live here, but cannot, and I *will* not humble myself further to these boors. I have debased myself too much already to court their patronage. Yet, still they call me proud, and say I have 'high notions,' because I get bored at hearing nothing spoken of but mules, and cattle and hogs. Their souls never rise to nobler objects, and even when they kneel in prayer their thoughts wander away to their pig-styes and cattle-pens."

"Do not speak so, Edgar—be kind—be charitable," urged Cora, with her soft, pleading voice.

"I cannot, Cora—cannot, I am but mortal. These grovelling man-animals are rich—*I* am poor—and thus they dare to look down upon *me*, and measure me by a purse-string. These men who, if they were passing yon romantic hill-side, with all the beauties of landscape, dashing water, and sunset spread out before them, would turn with indifference from it all to admire the fatness of some passing prize pig. And can I help feeling my superiority to these govelling ignoramuses—can I avoid contrasting myself with them? You know I cannot, Cora—you have the same feeling yourself."

"But you should take care not to exhibit this intellectual superiority, Edgar, where it may become offensive."

"And do you counsel this? Shall I, too, grovel in the dust and root with pigs, when I might soar amid the stars? Ah! Cora, Cora, I did not expect such counsel and advice from you."

"Forgive me, Edgar—I spoke hastily and without thinking.—Pardon me, my friend."

Her sorrowing eyes were gazing into mine, and ruling my will by some gentle magnetism. I bowed, and our hands again thrilled wonderously at each others touch.

"Why did you use that cold word *friend*, Cora? It chilled me like a dreary mist."

"What else should I use—are we anything more than friends to each other?"

"May we not be, Cora?"

I pressed her hand, which was not withdrawn, and we stood beneath a lofty tree, and once again listened to the whispering leaves and the murmuring river.

"When I am away in the West, and hear no familiar voices thrilling my heart like strains of music—when I sink to sleep among strangers, and all through the weary day see none but stranger faces, and amid the bustle of detested trade am sad and lonely—may I not dream that to *one* dear heart I still can turn and murmur, 'Cora does not forget me?" I paused. "Speak, O, speak to me?"

Our eyes met and our souls throbbed in them, and grew dim in tears. Our lips trembled in one long, passionate kiss, and the bending angels smiled upon our love—for it was holy.

* * * * * * * *

"The night dews are falling—we must go home, Edgar."

Slowly we walked back to the village, our souls filled with a holy happiness, as was the house of the Israelite of old, when the ark rested in it.

We reached her home at twilight, and the heavens panting with starry worlds, bended above us in their yearning beauty.

We parted at the door, and my soul staggered beneath its weight of joy, as in the distant hills of Neveda, some toiling miner, when he has found a golden heap of ore, trembles beneath his wealth, and steadies himself to hold it.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"PEOPLE do not woo in this style *now-a-days:* men and women never did, except in novels." I cannot tell what other persons do, for I spoke as love and nature taught me. I had been strangely reared; my life was wild and wayward, and so with Cora, fresh from the passion-breathing atmosphere of a tropic clime. We were young and excitable, and language which upon paper seems unatural, came as freely from our lips "as rain from the clouds of summer, or tears from the eyelids start."

Cora and I contrived to meet almost daily, and hours radiant as the wings of angels flitted above our heads. I sometimes paused, and wondered if seraphs *could* be happier. Their bliss might be of longer duration, but could not be more intensely rapturous.

And thus weeks passed swiftly away, while business was ignored. Cora had entered my soul. Her presence filled it with joy and glory: all else was forgotten. God's image was darkened; and upon prostrate knees I knelt alone to woman!

But in time—a very short time it seemed to me—there came a change, not altogether unexpected, but which yet startled me from my dreamings. I had told Cora of my contemplated trip to the West. At the time I had not definitely determined upon it, but had only indulged in some unsatisfactory longings relative to the subject.

Now I must make up my mind to do something, for Mr. Brown had informed my mother that the store was scarcely paying expenses. She had asked me about the matter, and I reluctantly admitted that I feared it was but too true. *I* had not been there much of

late, and so far as I could judge, the receipts were somewhat increased during my absence.

I made this admission with a reckless indifference that astonished even myself, and caused my mother to open her eyes in sad wonder. An accusing spirit whispered that *I*, whether knowingly or ignorantly, whether sinning by omission or commission, had been the cause of our coming misfortune.

"What shall we do, Edgar? I have been thinking, but cannot determine."

Her voice was so sweetly sad, and appealed to me as though *I*, a poor dreamer, had been endowed with all the experience and wisdom of a worldling. How confiding was my mother's love; yet ah, how blind!

She did not see, or would not acknowledge, my defects of character as I myself saw and felt them.

"I scarcely know, mother. Suppose we were to sell the store and all the goods, and loan out the money at interest for your maintenance."

"But the amount would be so small that the interest would scarcely support one person; and there are your sisters, my son."

"True! But could not Aunt Kitty be hired out?" I suggested.

"And then we should have no servant; and the people here do not much respect families who have to do their own work. I fear this cannot be, Edgar. I could not bear to see your sisters looked upon as I doubt not they would be,—no, no!"

"Forgive the suggestion, mother. I could not either. I will do any thing to save *them* from this humiliation." And I rose from the sofa, and sunk upon a low stool at her feet. My head nestled upon her lap, as in early childhood, and her delicate hand swept through my curling hair.

"And what, my Edgar, will you do?"

"Oh, many things and all things for you and for my sisters."

She smiled fondly, but with sadness.

"The world is cold and selfish, and you are young and inexperienced, my dear boy."

I was silent and absorbed in thought, or rather an attempt at thought. Before I could reply, my mother again spoke.

"Ah! but for the misplaced generosity of your father—peace to his absent soul!—all these conflicts with poverty might have been spared us. How one act of a moment may entail years of sorrow!"

"But he is gone, mother. Judge not the dead!"

"I cannot forget their actions when I see ever before me the troubles of the living."

Her hand pressed my head with fond tenderness, and I looked up through my tears to her pale, but still beautiful features.

"But for your father's connection with the Masonic fraternity, you and your sisters would have been left immensely wealthy."

"Perhaps *they* might assist——"

"*Assist me!* What do you mean, insolent boy?" interrupted my mother, starting indignantly to her feet, and almost dashing me from her.

"Let them dare to insult me by such an offer, and I would spit upon the bearer of it with contempt, and spurn him from me as I would a snarling cur! And *you*, to have my blood in your veins, and stoop to breathe such infamy to me! My cheek burns with shame for you, Edgar Trevor. Leave me!"

"I go, madame; and my mother shall never blush with shame for me again! I intended to say that they might assist us by their influence, and not by their charity. I myself would as soon take one of the thirty pieces of Iscariot's silver as receive their money without an equivalent. Farewell, mother! I obey you."

I moved to the door. She stood proudly in the centre of the room. I reached the hall.

"Edgar!" called a calm, clear voice, which came from the conquered pride of a noble heart.

I turned and met my mother's yearning gaze. What a struggle there was! But pride was overmastered, and I felt the magnanimity that would ask pardon for insult, even of a son.

Her lips were quivering with an effort at self-command as she spoke, and her eyes, wet with tears, looked into mine.

"May heaven pardon and forgive me, Edgar, and you——?"

Advancing a step forward, she extended her hand. Clasping it, I sunk at her feet.

"*I* have nothing to forgive, my mother; but love me as of old, and I ask no more. The harsh words have gone with the passing winds: we will both forget that we have heard them."

I led my mother to her chair, and then again took the low stool at her feet. She covered her face with her hands and wept.

"Forget the past, mother."

"I will strive, my son; but I loathe myself for giving way to such bursts of passion—and you, too, will cease to respect me."

"Never, my dear mother, never!"

"You are my only stay—my only hope! O, if you could but know the prayers I have offered—the hopes I have dared to indulge! But leave me now, my son," she added more quietly—"my head burns with fever."

"Let me call Helen—you are unwell."

"No, no—it is but momentary, and will pass away presently."

I filled a glass with water, and offered it to her. She moistened her lips, and then, supporting her head upon her hand, leaned back wearily in the chair. Darkening the windows, I noiselessly left the room.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

As I returned home to dinner the following day, Fanny met me in the hall, and beckoned me to follow her into the parlor.

"What is the matter now, Fanny," I asked, seating myself at the window, and looping back the curtain.

"I am afraid you'll make sport of me if I tell you."

"I declare upon my honor that I will not."

"Well,"—said Fanny, biting her lips and looking down evasively upon the carpet.

"Well," repeated I, imitating her tone, "I am listening patiently."

"Ah, the rogue, I knew he would laugh at me. I'll let mamma tell him herself."

"Why, am I laughing, Fanny?"

"O no, master Edgar, not laughing, but it is just under the surface, ready to explode as soon as I apply the match. Well, courage! hist! hist! I touch the mine and risk the consequences. "I am—going—to be—married."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed I, starting to my feet, "to whom?"

But my sister was smothered with laughter, and could not reply.

"What a terrific shock! Edgar, 'twas perfectly electric. Shall I tell you who it is I am to honor with my hand, or can you guess?"

"Pray tell me—not Mr. Hunt, the lawyer."

"He is the man," said my sister, demurely. What do you think of him, Edgar? By your coolness and silence, I infer you will not like him for a brother."

"If you but love him, Fanny, that is enough."

"But your opinion?"

"And shall I give it, even if I offend you?"

" Yes, yes."

I dreaded to speak, for what fresh budding hopes my words might cruelly chill. But I loved my sister.

" He drinks, Fanny, I have seen him intoxicated."

" O, once he did, but that was long ago—and is that all?"

" And is not that enough? would my sunny-hearted sister marry a drunkard? I saw him reeling home to bed but one week ago. 'Twas nearly eleven o'clock, and the night was still, as I heard him speak in silly, maudlin language, and laugh so like an idiot that it shocked me."

" No, no, dear Edgar, you were mistaken, it could not be. Why, he assured me on his knees, with tears in his eyes, that he had forsworn the cup forever."

" And which will you believe, my sister, I, whom you have known from childhood, or this man, the acquaintance of a year?"

She threw herself upon the fauteuil, and sobbed and struggled in agony with her heart. But still she gave me no answer.

" Ah, you have lost confidence in me, sweet sister. You cannot, do not believe me."

" No, no, do not wrong me. I dare not doubt." Her frame shook, and sobbing wildly, she buried her face in the fauteuil.

" And more than this, sister—but shall I tell you now?"

" Yes, tell me all, all, I can bear anything, for I shall never marry a man who can perjure himself."

" He gambles, and is a libertine, and——"

" Enough, enough," she exclaimed passionately. " O that I were dead."

And she pronounced the last words with such a concentrated tone of hopeless mournfulness, that the tears started to my eyes.

" Should I have told her?" asked I of myself. See, what agony she suffers in knowing that one she crowned and sceptered with her love, one she believed so pure, so stainless, and so noble, should, like the fallen arch angel, creep into a toad. But it is far better to endure now, and cast away this love—if such is possible—than to suffer long years of wretchedness hereafter.

"Do but hear me now, Fanny, and I will tell you what he thinks of marriage. I learned it from a bosom friend.

"'Woman is far inferior to man,' says Mr. Hunt, 'intellectually as well as physically. Education can never raise her to the equality of *his* position, for God did not endow her with the same faculties. She should not dare to claim equal rights, even though man does permit her to be educated, for she should remember that St. Paul says, 'wives, be in subjection to your husbands.' It is true Mr. Hunt admits that this advice was given nearly two thousand years ago, to a community of half civilized gentiles, and not intended for the women of the nineteenth century. But it is applicable to them, and they should obey it—yes, sirree. And when I get married I don't want my wife to be gadding about, nor wasting her time in reading—the house is the proper place for her. There is where she ought to stay and nurse her children, and if she hasn't got any, why, let her go and mend her husband's old stockings, and sew buttons on his shirts. If she needs to take in work, and can find time to do it, all right enough, but remember the money that the wife makes, is the lawful property of the husband, of course. The husband and the wife are one, says the law, and that *one*—is the husband. These are the right kind of laws, they keep women in their proper places. Yes, sirree.'

"That is the way Mr. Hunt talks, Fanny. How does it please you, my sister? Ah, your eyes sparkle—your chest heaves—your sobs die away. Bravo! bravo! Rouse up the slumbering pride of your heart, and crush this credulous love, or cast it out forever."

"I will, brother," she said, rising to her feet, and dashing her tears away, "but what a struggle it will cost me," she added doubtingly. "And if I cannot, Edgar—I do believe I love him still."

"Shame! shame! has the daughter of Madelaine Trevor no self-respect? Would she marry a drunkard, a gambler, and a libertine, and sink into a pitiful domestic drudge, a household slave?"

"No, no, I will spurn him, and taunt him with his porjury. I'll go immediately and return his letters and his presents, with an explanation for the act, and if he dares to ask an interview, my pride shall support me."

"Yes, see him if he desires it. 'Twill test you. But he will not ask it, Fanny, if you tell him all you know, and give me as your authority."

"I will do it, Edgar, I am determined *now.*"

She moved from the apartment, and calm disdain sat, as a coronet upon her brow. She was saved from a weary, trailing life of unknown sorrows. And I thanked God humbly, sincerely for it.

Pausing in the hall to recover my self-possession, I entered the dining-room. Aunt Kitty had just brought in a dish of delicately-cooked young chickens, and my mother was arranging it upon the table. I sat down upon a low chair, and could not help contrasting the quiet serenity of this scene with the tumultuous unrest of the one I had just witnessed.

My mother inquired why Fanny did not come in to dinner. Excusing her upon the ground of engagements, my mother smiled. I knew the meaning of the smile, but feared, at the moment, to tell her that her unexpressed surmise was far from being correct. Helen came in with a small basket of raspberries, which she had b en gathering in the garden, and emptied them into a glass dish, ha filled with fragments of broken ice.

"They will be deliciously cool for desert, Edgar," said she, turning to me, as I watched her movements.

"Yes, indeed," I observed, but dare say Helen would have been somewhat amused, and perhaps pained, if she could have read the thought that at the moment flitted through my mind.—"I wonder why in the world Helen has never married?" And then I remembered the many persons whom I knew that she would suit exactly. But the deuce of it was, would they please Helen? She might have had a half dozen offers from just such people for aught I could

tell, and have rejected them all. Indeed I knew that she had refused several—as the world styles them—very eligible proposals.

Every locked heart worships its own bright ideal or mourns before the black-curtained shrine of some buried love.

And so it might be with my sister.

"Where is Bel?" said my mother to Helen.

"I left her in her room, some time since."

"Yes'm, she's up stairs," interrupted Aunt Kitty, overhearing the remark, "and she told me to tell you, Missus, that you need not wait for her, 'case she is busy trimmin' the body of Miss Fanny's weddin' dress."

"What is all that, Aunt Kitty? Trimming Miss Fanny's wedding dress?"

"Who told you that Miss Fanny was to be married?" asked my mother in surprise.

"O, nobody at all—I jest 'spected it from appearances."

"You should never judge from appearances, Aunty; that is an old saying, and often a very true one," observed Helen.

"And Miss Fanny is not going to be married—the match is broken off," said I, quietly.

Helen and my mother stared at me in astonishment.

"What!—why, Edgar? we did not know that you had yet heard of it, and *I*," said my mother, "was this moment thinking of revealing the mystery, and begging your pardon for not having told you before. We thought to carry you by surprise, and lo! you turn the tables upon us. Pray explain!"

Aunt Kitty opened her eyes and mouth, and mutely asked the same question, for she, good old soul, felt as much interest in the subject as any of us.

I then related all that had passed between my sister and myself in the parlor, and told them that Fanny was now writing a note to Mr. Hunt, severing the connection forever, and that she intended returning all his letters and presents.

Helen would not wait to hear any more, and ran off to Fanny's

room. My mother was as indignant as myself, and told me that I had acted just as she would have desired. She rejoiced to know that Fanny's pride was sufficiently roused to enable her to reject him, and bidding me take my dinner alone, she left the room and went up to my sister.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The deficiency in the income derived from the store again demanded our attention, and Fanny's troubles were, for the time, forgotten.

My mother, at my suggestion, finally concluded to dispose of the whole stock of goods and rent the store-room—which belonged to us. The goods were advertised, and in a few days a gentleman from the country, who wished to engage in mercantile pursuits, came to us, and making a very liberal proposition, it was accepted, and he purchased the entire stock and leased the store.

I was heartily glad that we had so easily and profitably succeeded in "retiring from trade," and congratulated myself in getting out of the affair so well. I felt relieved, and my spirit rebounded as a balloon, when the cords which bind it to earth are cut asunder.

Yet, wherefore?

Was I not now without an occupation in life, and to what should I turn for support? I had no business qualifications—at least I had heard this so often that I had almost begun to believe it—I was not qualified for a profession, and did not expect to study for one. But for all this I felt untrammelled and independent. I would not now have to stereotype my countenance into a deferential smile in meeting with every country bumpkin, but might pass them by with an insolent nod of indifference or even in silence, if it so pleased me. My mother's income from the interest of the money received for the goods, together with the rent of the house, would scarcely be sufficient for the support of herself and my sisters, but then I would soon make up the deficiency, and proud would I be to do it.

So confidently I reasoned and dreamed, as still lingering about the village, I felt loth to depart. I had determined to leave the place, however, and notwithstanding my mother's urgent appeals to me, to endeavor to do something at home, I could not be prevailed upon to listen to any propositions. I nursed fond, ambitious dreams in my heart, and these buoyed me up.

"And what can you do away from home?" peremptorily demanded my mother, at last, losing all patience with my stubborn silence.

"Time will show, mother," replied I, confidently, "if I fail in my projects, why, as a matter of course, I will return as soon as possible. And if I succeed, you will not ask—though you might prefer—that I should be here, near you."

"You might, at least, confide your projects to your mother, Edgar. Her advice may, perchance, assist and instruct you."

"Do not tempt me with such appeals, mother; do not ask me in such language. I shall give way before it. I will tell you at some other time, but do not, I beg of you, insist upon knowing now."

"Well, I shall wait, then, Edgar, if it must be so. May God give you success and bless your plans. I know that my son will never be tempted from the paths of honor.'

"Never," I exclaimed, and the conversation ceased.

Fanny was true to herself, and discarded her deceiving lover. A former gentleman, who had long unsuccessfully sued for her hand, now came forward—when he heard of the circumstance—proposed again, and to the surprise of every one, was accepted. He was an intelligent and wealthy young land-owner and farmer of the neighborhood, quite handsome and good-natured, not particularly distinguished for talent of any kind, but genial and companionable, without any of the many faults and vices with which men of talent and genius are often cursed.

Mr. Hunt shortly afterwards left the village, and was subsequently heard of as bar-tender on a Mississippi steamer. Whether she blew up (very likely) or ran a snag through her bottom, (altogether probable) we never knew.

CHAPTER XXX.

By the rugged banks of the dark river, now foaming over obstructing rocks, and vehement with retarded fierceness and voiceful complainings—now sweeping resistlessly along in black surges of silence, and then vanishing behind the towering cliffs, and again roaring, rushing in tumultuous madness onwards—by the side of the river stood Cora, and I—stood by her side.

It was glorious moonlight, as I had seen it in my dreams, and Venus, the star of love, came forth, veiled in clouds, like a timid bride. The evening breeze murmured through the ripe, rustling cornfields, and the crisp leaves of the woods gave forth weird tones, that rose and swelled into sweet symphonies—Æolian harp-like sounds. Fairies, or rather the "millions of invisible spirits that walk the earth," seemed now filling all the air with poetry and with music.

"The widow and Mr. Burton will think we are lost, Edgar."

"They are not far distant, and have halted, I dare say, to watch the swollen current of the river—how wildly it foams?"

"It fills me with terror, Edgar. What if our heads should grow dizzy, and we fall from this great heighth?"

"This arm would protect you, Cora—lean upon it."

"It is dangerous standing here, shall we not leave the cliff?"

"Surely, if *you* wish to do so."

We drew back, Cora clinging protectingly to my arm.

"Here is a shelving rock, secure, and in the moonlight—let us take a seat."

And we sat down upon the rock—downy with drooping moss

" How your eyes gleam, Cora, the river has appalled you."

She smiled confidingly and nestled to my side.

" I had a strange dream last night, Edgar, and this same wild river ran through it, stormy and swollen as now, and not calm and murmuring as when we last met upon its margin."

" Tell me your vision and I'll interpret it."

" I thought that we were children—"

" Ah! then you dreamed of *me*—what happiness!"

" And that we wandered, gathering flowers in the hidden glens and sunny fields, upon the river banks, and when we stopped you bruised my lips with ripe, luscious strawberries, amid cymbal-like laughter. We drank from the springs of the woods, and did nothing but chase bright, golden and purple-winged butterflies all day long, and this was our life. And we never tired of it, for we were children. But one day, after we had pursued a beautiful butterfly through the long, sunny hours, and had not yet touched the dust that crusted upon its wings, it suddenly flew this way, through the dim vista of trees stretching behind us."

She paused to point to the spot with her finger.

" Well," said I, eagerly.

" It fluttered and danced gaily along through the wood, and reached the brink of the cliff, where we stood but a moment ago. You screamed that we would lose it—this bright, bewildering joy, and sprang forward to clasp it. I forced you back to save you, and in doing so lost my footing—I turned to give you a last, parting glance. My soul throbbed fearfully in my dimning eyes—I sunk, and oh! my Edgar! I fell down, down, through a mighty cloudy space, and—then awoke, panting with fear."

" 'Twas a hideous dream."

" And how will you interpret it?" she asked, and her dark eyes flashed an electric thrill through all my frame.

" I have read the interpretation in my own heart. *I* can prevent the threatened danger if God strengthens my soul, and will save you from this fall."

"God grant it," she ejaculated fervently.

There was a pause.

"Do you ever have dimly defined remembrances, Cora, that flit across the soul like the shadows of clouds upon the water, and do these wandering thoughts—that can scarcely be called your own, they seem so wayward and tameless—haunt you with the memory of scenes which seem to have passed in some other state of existence?"

I paused and gazed down into the strange depths of Cora's eyes, turned wonderingly upon me.

"I sometimes think I have such visitations, Edgar, but they are not capable of being worded, and so intangible that I can only retain a faint trace of them before they are gone."

"Yes, even so, Cora. I have sometimes awakened suddenly, and it seemed to me that my soul had left me and gone wandering away into unknown worlds, as soon as its prison-house, the body, had sunk to sleep. It had vanished with more than electric rapidity, and soaring through the stars, lighted in some stranger sphere, to hold communion with other immortals, and then, as I started and awoke, had rushed back like some armed sentinel, who leaves his post at midnight, and trembles to find himself discovered upon his return.

Cora listened in silence and appeared lost in revery.

But she did not speak.

"Since I first met you, Cora—do you listen?—I thought some one moved behind us."

"'Twas but the wind, or perhaps the birds, Edgar, speak on."

She turned her face, lighted by the moonbeams, full upon me.

"Since I first met you, I have been continually striving to remember where I have seen those eyes of yours—but I cannot, and I have given up the search as hopeless. Our souls, in some state of preëxistence, in other worlds, must have gazed at each other through these same wondrous windows of the immortals—perhaps have loved and smiled, and even wept in past years."

"This, then, is why we leaped the barriers of the conventional world, with its etiquette and forms, and our souls clasped hands like two long lost friends."

"Yes, Cora, it must be so."

"How happy we should be! O God! I thank thee that we live!"

We arose to our feet as, in a tremulous voice, I pronounced the words aloud; and then, with Cora's arm nestling in mine, we bowed and uncovered our heads.

There was a breathless stillness; the wandering winds of the night hushed their voices, and we heard not the turbulent river. Suddenly a dry branch crackled in the wood behind us. Footsteps hastily approached. We stood motionless, thinking it was perhaps some lost horse straying from its owner.

Leaping upon a fallen tree, and then springing down the slight descent into the road, a gigantic negro, in soiled and torn clothes, without shoes, and hatless, doubtfully regarded us for a moment, and then, as we did not move nor speak, timidly approached. Cora clung to my arm, and trembled in every nerve.

"What do you want here?" exclaimed I, with haughty boldness, advancing in front of my companion, and confronting the intruder.

He came slowly out from the shadow of the trees into the clear moonlight. We were within five paces of each other, and now I could distinctly perceive that the man was emaciated to thinness, and that his flesh, as well as his clothes, was torn with the briars. He appeared as though half famished; yet there was an open, generous expression in his eyes that assured me I had nothing to fear.

"You are a runaway, are you not?" said I, stopping and regarding him calmly.

"Yes, sah, I run off last week from Woodford county. My mas'r beat me with a club, and whipped me till the blood come, because I told him I was sick and couldn't work in the field. And I *was* sick,—God knows I was! Then he threatened to sell me to a nigger buyer in Lexington, to go down the river with a gang he

was just makin' up. I couldn't bear this, so I left his house at midnight, when the rain poured down, and the lightnin' flashed, and the thunder roared in the dark, dreary woods."

"Last Friday night was it?" I inquired.

"Yes, mas'r, and a terrible time it was! I traveled till daybreak, and sometimes I would git lost, and have to wait till it lightened to see the way; then I lay hid all day in the top of a tree, away up among the thick leaves, and then started on agin as soon as it was dark. I passed through Parras, and the patrolers got after me, and run me two miles; but I dodged 'em, and made off for the woods, and then I traveled this far to-night. But oh, mas'r, I am starved almost to death. I haven't eat anything for three days 'cept the green corn that I pulled as I run through the fields. I heard you and that blessed angel talking all about the stars and heaven and God, and the tears ran down my cheeks as I lay and listened; and thinks I the Almighty has surely brought me to these young people that talk so much like the angels, and I determined to risk all, and throw myself upon your generosity, and beg of you, dear young mas'r, to only give me a bite to eat, and the holy Jesus will reward you!"

I hesitated.

"Only one bite, mas'r, and do not tell on me!"

He kneeled upon the hard road at my feet, and looked up imploringly.

"Only speak to him, sweet mistress, and he'll do it: I know he will if *you* ask him!"

Cora appeared undecided and perplexed. She was no longer afraid, and now half inclined to pity. She turned to me, and we looked at each other.

"What shall we do, Cora?"

"Act as our hearts prompt us, and as God commands!"

"But it is against the law to assist you to escape," said I, turning to the negro, who still kneeled, and appeared scarcely able to rise. "There is three hundred dollars reward offered for you if

you are the same man that ran off last Friday night from Woodford. Did you belong to Judge Blank? and is your name Leonard?"

His countenance changed as I spoke, and he seemed to gasp for breath.

"Yes, mas'r, I won't lie—my name *is* Leonard, and that man owns me. But you won't take me up? You won't send me back to him? O, pity me, and think what you would do if you was in my place!"

I could see the tears start to his eyes, and glisten in the moonlight.

"But should I assist you, Leonard, they will arrest and try me, and perhaps I should be sent to the penitentiary."

"Oh, the good Lord will save you, for I know he sent me to you to-night. I heard the voice whisperin' to me."

"I know it would be obeying God's command; but then the laws of the State say it is a crime to help a fugitive slave to escape. "What, oh, what shall we do, Cora?"

"God's laws must *always* be obeyed. Doesn't the Bible teach that, Edgar?"

"Yes. But, Leonard, we must leave you; we will not stop, but I dare not aid you. I hear the clatter of horses' hoofs far down the road. Fly! hide yourself, and leave us! Should you be taken——"

"But I *shall not* be!" said the negro, interrupting me. "I'll dash my brains out on this cliff, and my body shall float in that black river before they carry me back to that cursed tyrant! May the Lord God Omnipotent blast him!"

"Hark! they approach nearer, Leonard. Leave us!—away! away!"

He moved off to the woods, and Cora and myself turned towards the village.

I hesitated, halted, and leaving my companion, ran back.

"Leonard," I called, "the horsemen that are approaching may not be pursuers—in fact, it is not at all probable that they are;

and should they pass along the road without halting, you may feel sure they do not search for you. Be confident, and remain near here in concealment, and in one hour I will return with provisions for you."

I spoke hurriedly, in a low voice, as I stood upon the verge of the wood, and peered up into the shadowy darkness.

"But, mas'r, you refused me a while ago. You may deceive, and set a trap for me."

"Deceive you!" repeated I, indignantly. "*I* deceive you! Such a thought did not once enter my mind. I swear before Heaven to act in good faith!"

"Enough, young mas'r. God forgive me! but I doubt all that speak, only in the brutes can I place confidence."

"You may trust me, Leonard. In an hour I will return, and will utter a sharp, piercing whistle; then you may come to me."

"Edgar!" called Cora, anxiously.

"Be cautious, Leonard, I must be off. I'm coming, Cora."

"Why, it is past nine o'clock," said she reprovingly. "Mr. Burten has called, and he and Mrs. Layson are now coming after us."

"It cannot be helped. We will apologize, and tell them we did not think it was so late. And then the night is so calm and beautiful, that shall excuse us."

"You and Cora must have been wandering a long distance, Edgar," observed Mr. Burten, as we approached.

"We were only sitting on the cliff, watching the moon and the river."

"Ah! gazing at the moon, were you? Does the night air chill you, Cora?" he added tenderly.

"It must feel cold to the dear child!" said Mrs. Layson. "Here, put this scarf about your neck. I do not need it."

But Cora assured them that she was quite comfortable, and thanked the kind widow for the offer. So we walked along towards the village—Mr. Burten and Mrs. Layson in front, and Cora and I loitering after them

Presently two horsemen—young men from the country—cantered rapidly past us, talking and laughing gaily.

"He is safe!" whispered Cora. "They do not suspect any thing."

"No, they could not have heard at such a distance; and even if they had, they would not have known what the voices meant."

"Let us walk quickly, Edgar. See! our companions are at the gate."

"Good night, Cora; you know I cannot stop."

"Good night, Edgar."

And we parted.

CHAPTER XXXI.

I HURRIED homewards, and asked my mother for the key of the pantry, as I wished to give a poor man whom I had met, some bread. He was begging, and I told him to wait and I would bring the provision to him. My mother thought from the way in which I spoke, that the beggar was a professional one, and doubtless imagined he was some poor Italian or German, for they at that time, were quite common in the country.

"There are so many impostors about now, that you should not give them any money, Edgar, for they may go off and spend it for drink; but if they want anything to eat, always give them something."

"All right, mother," said I, coming out with my pockets filled, and a large roll of bread wrapped up in a newspaper, "here is the key. I may not return for some time, but you need not wait for me if I am late."

"The evening is so pleasant that I could sit up until midnight, and never weary. Tell Helen and Bel to come in from the front gate. It is too late to be standing out there talking to gentlemen."

My mother resumed her book.

The night dews had fallen heavily, and as the grass and weeds grew exceedingly rank, I was perfectly saturated with moisture when I climbed the fence, and reached the road, for I had gone a very round about way. Looking fearfully around, I halted and listened. A cow sleeping upon the long, wet grass, rolled over and moaned lazily. The moon was sinking, and casting long spectral shadows. I moved forward again, and turning a curve, came in sight of the swollen river. Its roar echoing in the stillness of the

woods, smote upon my ears with terror. Why was I so fearful, and why should I skulk through the weeds and briars to aid a fellow mortal with food? If I should be discovered, they will arrest me as an abolitionist—that detested, disgraceful name, the very syllables of which are infamy.

I walked on hastily, reasoning with myself, but still doubting and hesitating. A screech owl from a tree immediately above me, uttered a dismal, prolonged scream. I felt the blood chill at my heart, as the sound, like a funeral dirge, echoed and died away in the forest.

But I was now at the spot where Leonard had first appeared, and there was the shelving rock overgrown with moss, where Cora and I had seated ourselves. How happy we had been before this black trouble appeared as a stern duty, which must be attended to. I paused beneath the old tree, and gazed down into the river—my mind was almost as tumultuous as its stream. All my previous training and education had taught me to loathe the name of abolitionist, and here I was doing precisely the thing that an abolitionist would have done. *I*, a chivalric young Kentuckian, aiding a negro slave to escape from his lawful master.

Pride urged me to return.

I moved hastily from the river, and uttered a long, shrill whistle, then listened as it echoed far through the woods. Soon I heard footsteps stealthily approaching—a long, dark shadow fell across my pathway, and the negro stood submissively before me.

"I have brought you food and drink, Leonard—here, take them."

And I emptied my pockets and gave him a small flask of milk.

"God Almighty bless you, my noble young master," said the fugitive, and his wet eyes turned pleadingly to heaven.

"I have risked a great deal to bring you these things, Leonard, now refresh yourself quickly—you must leave this place immediately, for if you remain you may be discovered Travel all night, and you will soon reach the Ohio river. I need not direct you what route to take, for you know that best yourself. When you reach

the river, you will find numbers of skulking abolitionists to rush you through to Canada, on a diabolical invention they call the 'underground railroad.' Eat—be off, and away!"

He devoured the food voraciously as I spoke, and seeing me about to leave him, asked my name. I told him.

"May the good Lord load you with blessings. I'll never forget you, and every night remember you in my prayers."

I waved him away with my hand.

"Do not linger here, there is danger. I must leave you—dash through the woods, and do not travel on the highway."

Gathering his remaining food in his arms, he leaped into the undergrowth.

"Good bye, mas'r Edgar, God bless you."

He was gone, and I turned and fled back to the village. It was after eleven o'clock when I reached home, and I found my mother awaiting my return.

"You have been gone a long time, Edgar, pray what detained you?"

I did not intend to tell her, for fear she might not approve of the course I had taken, but now that she directly questioned me, I could not avoid it.

So I told my mother all.

She listened in wondering silence, and when I had concluded, observed, "you have fortunately escaped without being discovered, but this must be hushed up, and not a word breathed concerning it. May Cora Belmont be depended upon?"

"Assuredly, mother, I would trust Cora with the secret of my life—how can you doubt her, after once looking into her eyes."

"I do not know her so well as my son does."

I smiled.

"Should any one have seen you, I tremble to anticipate the consequences. You know how excited the people are at the escape of so many of their slaves within the past month, and should any one hear but a whisper of this, O my Edgar, my dear, dear boy—hark! what noise is that. Look out and see if anything is visible."

I sprang to the open window to obey my mother's command.

" 'Twas only the dog playing in the grass. I see him now running through the rose bushes."

" Close the shutters, Edgar, it is past eleven, and Helen and Bel have retired long ago. Here is a candle to light you to bed, but how fatigued you look—come and let me kiss you."

She pressed her lips fondly to my temples, and murmured good night, good night."

CHAPTER XXXII.

AUTUMN had come with its fading glories, its ripening fruits, and its sad decay, yet still I lingered in the village. Fanny had returned from her bridal tour, and with her husband, removed to their pleasant country home a few miles distant from us. And Mrs. Fanny Willis—for such was her name—appeared very fond of her husband, and very happy.

The little humdrum country place, as I had scornfully styled our village, seemed to become dearer to me, as the thought of leaving it assumed more of a reality with the approach of the time which I had set for my departure.

I was often puzzled what to do with myself, for the monotony of a small country town is often wearisomely unendurable. Occasionally I lounged at the stores, where there were always any number of idlers, but then this class of people did not harmonize with me, and although I was sometimes impelled by utter listlessness, into their company, thinking even they would, perhaps, prove a relief; yet, I never failed to leave in a few moments, irritated and annoyed by some unintentional remark. Then I would walk hastily through the village, smiling with scarce concealed contempt at the dull stupid clerks, and lazy merchants, wondering in my heart how they could see anything in all this monotony, to satisfy and fill the craving which I restlessly felt for change, change, change.

There was a youth residing in Millville at this time, about my own age, studying medicine with the Esculapias of the village.

Precious little it was, however, that Fred Ashton read in those

huge, dry folios, filled with plates of skulls and skeletons, although I frequently caught him sitting demurely in the office, in the doctor's great cushioned arm chair, with his eyes fixed upon the closely printed pages. When I came in the day after my adventure with Leonard, I found him so seated, and could not but smile as he looked up with a sigh of infinite relief.

" Close your musty tomes, Fred, and come and take a stroll with me. I know you are tired of that stupid book."

" Yes, that's a fact, Edgar, but I must wade through it—confound me if I've read three pages to-day."

" Toss it aside, and your cares with it—the true philosophy of life is to take it easy, and dream the dreams of the Epicurians."

" It does look tempting out of doors," observed Ashton, stretching himself with a yawn.

" Take a seat, Trevor, and keep me company. I'm too lazy to walk."

" Do you really mean to insult me—ask me to take a seat in this close, little box, filled to the ceiling with the odor of drugs and medicines."

" O, nonsense, I'm used to it, and don't smell anything disagreeable—have a segar, won't you ?" " Pete," calling to the negro office boy, " bring me a light."

" I never smoke, Ashton.—So you'll not go with me? How stupid to sit here amidst drugs and balsams, filling the air with vile tobacco smoke, while away off yonder," and I pointed to the distant hills, and many-hued forests, " nature loads the air with perfumes, and breathes over all the dreamy mist of Indian summer."

" Hold on, Trevor, I'll go—havn't another word to say."

" Pete, you black rascal, where's my hat? Been out sparking the ' cullud' ladies in it, eh ?"

" No, sah," answered the boy, " I isn't been doin' nuthin' o' the kind, mas'r Fred, but I jist might as well do it as not, case he's allers 'cusin' me of it, mas'r Edgar."

And Pete turned to me with a comic grin, which exhibited all his stock of ivory.

"Well, hunt it up," said Ashton, laughing,—

"'O I would like to marry,
If I could only find
Some handsome, rich young lady,'

wouldn't you, Trevor? Provided, always, that she could say the first sentence of the Lord's prayer."

I smiled, and turned over the leaves of the book which Fred had been trying to read.

"Guess you won't git one o' that kind though, mas'r Fred—'case ye aint good lookin', and ye can't come in, ha! ha! ha!

'Picayune Butler's comin', comin',
Picayune Butler's comin' to town.'"

"You obstreperous scoundrel, have you got no manners—laughing, and singing your darned nigger songs before us gentlemen?" exclaimed Ashton, with a comical assumption of dignity. "I a professional character, too, and Mr. Trevor, here, a gentleman of leisure."

Peter only laughed the more, at this, and being a petted favorite of the doctor's, affected to busy himself in his search for the hat.

"Dad drat the hat—O, here it is, mas'r Fred, stuck under the shelf, with a bottle o' balsam in it."

"And who put it there, Pete?"

The boy looked confused at this question, and placed the bottle up in its place. Ashton had to repeat it as Pete handed him the hat sheepishly.

"Well, mas'r Fred, you won't say nothin' to the doctor ef I tell, will ye?"

"Certainly not," replied Ashton. "Come, be in a hurry, Mr. Trevor is waiting."

"Well, ye see, old Billy Mullikan's boy Jim, that brings the butter to town, ye know, he's got a sort of a complaint, and knowin' I stayed a good deal about the office, and heered the docter talk, he concluded to ax me to give him some medicine for hisself."

"You infernal rogue," cried Ashton, "and did you do it?"

"Yes, sah, I gin the poor ignorant darkey two or three drops o' balsam, and then put a little 'lasses in it. Sez I to him then, you take that to-night, go to bed early, and I'll insure it'll cure your gumption. So I charged him half a dollar, and 'twon't hurt him no how."

"Perhaps not, but if he dies they'll hang you high as Haman," said Ashton, solemnly.

"I never heerd o' him afore, mas'r Fred. Did he live in Kentuck? 'Case if he did it was a wonder he had his neck stretched—they don't never hang white folks here; only the darkeys and the poor white devils has to swing—white man, ef he's got the dimes, can easily buy off."

"No more of your impudence, Pete, or I'll tell the doctor about the balsam, and he'll tie you up and warm your hide for you."

"Come, let us go, Trevor—close the office door, Pete."

"All right, mas'r Fred—won't that poor nigger have a good time of it—ha! ha! ha!"

"The doctor has allowed Pete to have too many privileges, Ashton."

"Entirely—he is perfectly spoilt."

"Far too bold and free of speech for a slave," I continued, somewhat ironically.

"Yes, indeed, I'll have to correct him myself, if his master don't. By-the-bye, speaking of slaves reminds me of something. Did you know that a big black Hercules of a fellow belonging to judge Blank, of Woodford, ran off last Friday night, and passed through here on his way to the river?"

"Is it possible!" exclaimed I, in a tone of astonishment. "And was the fellow seen?" I added with languid indifference, stooping to pluck a spear of grass.

"No, not in the immediate vicinity. Some of the patrol saw him and gave pursuit, but he outstripped them, and ran like a deer."

"Then he escaped?" I asked, as though aroused to interest.

"Yes, the villain got off, but they pushed him so hard that he had to drop his provisions. He must have robbed some one's pantry, for his stock looked rather fresh." And Ashton laughed humorously.

"Some of them become desperate when they are hungry, and it is often dangerous to meet them. Pray, what was the reward, Fred? I take so little interest in these things, that I scarcely ever read the 'runaway' advertisements."

"Three hundred dollars. Pretty good offer, too. I wish I had only met the fellow, I would have checked him up with a six barrel pocket piece, and he should have yielded or died."

"Valiant Sir Fred!—Allow me to see your pistol."

"Be careful, Trevor, it is loaded."

"What! and do you always carry it?" I asked in astonishment, examining it carefully and cocking it. "Will you have that bird for your supper, Fred?"—I fired.

"Yes, yes, to both questions," he rejoined, running forward and taking up the bird, still fluttering in the grass.

"A pretty good shot, Monsieur Trevor—I think you could pick off a runaway very handsomely."

I returned him the pistol, but made no reply.

"And would you accept a reward for capturing a fugitive slave, Ashton, you, a proud, chivalrous Virginian, connected—as I believe you boast of being—with all 'the first families?'"

"No, I don't know that I should, but if so, would bestow the money upon widows and orphans in charity."

"O thou philanthropist!"

"What!" demanded Ashton, irritated out of his usual easy, good nature, by my sneering tone. "What are you laughing at?"

"I would as soon accept a portion of Benedict Arnold's treason money."

"Pshaw," responded my companion indifferently, "great men will differ, Edgar," and he laughed carelessly and flung himself upon the grass beneath a wide-spreading elm.

We had been gradually ascending since leaving the village, and were now upon a considerable eminence, commanding a fine view of the distant country, the wild, romantic river, the undulating fields, the forests—tinted with the brilliant hues of autumn, and the hills—stretching far away and vanishing in the dreamy mists of the horizon.

"By the gods, it is a glorious scene," ejaculated Ashton, with enthusiasm.

I stood still, regarding it in voiceless enjoyment. As I gazed Ashton commenced repeating, in a deep-toned, thrilling voice,

"Lives there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
As his eyes stretched around, o'er head—
'O, what a grand—*potato patch!*'"

"Treason! treason!" I shouted. "You insult the majesty of nature."

"Pray the old dame to grant me pardon, Trevor, I'll sin no more."

We lay beneath the shady elms and talked indolently, and at intervals, as we watched the fleecy clouds floating languidly in the deep, blue stillness of the sky. We talked of books and of beauty, and then of wealth, and all the boundless happiness it would confer upon us, and of Fame, crowning the kneeling worshipper with leafy laurels.

Dreaming away the hours in Nature's picture-gallery of landscapes and ever shifting panoramic beauty, with the soft winds fanning us into slumberous indolence, and the birds chanting sweet poetry to thread upon our dreamings, we forgot that the hour for dinner had passed, and sprang to our feet to return home "deep in the afternoon."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

My sister Bel and myself were sitting at the parlor window. She was sewing, I reading to her.

Carriage wheels startled us, and we looked up, as an elegant equipage, drawn by two dashing grey horses, with proud, arching necks and haughty tread, drove up to the gate and halted.

A portly black driver held the reins, and a sprightly mulatto, leaping from the seat, and bowing as he lifted his hat, opened the door. We soon perceived a gentleman step out, and what was our astonishment to recognize in him no other than Mr. Willis, Fanny's husband. Turning as he alighted, the roguish, mysterious lady herself, placing her delicately gloved fingers in her husband's, sprang from the carriage and ran up the gravel-walk to the house. Bel and I met her at the front door, and each received an enthusiastic kiss.

"What an agreeable surprise, dear Fanny! where did you get that handsome turn-out?"

"Purchased it a few days ago, and I begged Frank to keep it a secret, so that we could dash up to the door in grand style, and astonish you all. Where are mamma and Helen?" she asked, skipping into the hall and removing her gloves and bonnet, as Bel and I stood listening to her gleeful prattle.

"Did you think it was some great lady from foreign parts, come to bring you a fortune?"

"Indeed we did, Fanny—thought you another Cinderella, with her pumpkin coach and mousing horses. Run out, Edgar, and see if the driver isn't turning into a rat, and upon my word, the car-

riage, even now, looks yellow," said Bel, mischievously. "But where is your husband, Fanny?"

"He is bringing up the rear battalion—poor Frank, he fears the dear horses will catch cold, I believe—but here he is."

And our brother-in-law entered the room, smiling good-naturedly at Fanny's jests. Bel and I shook hands with him, and after exchanging a few remarks and congratulating him upon the dashing equipage, my sisters went out to look for their mother and Helen. Willis and myself were left alone in the parlor.

"Edgar," he commenced, after my sisters were out of hearing, "I heard some strange remarks concerning you, yesterday, and I cannot feel satisfied without informing you."

"Ah, pray tell me what they were?"

"You, doubtless, remember hearing of the flight of a runaway slave, not long since, who was said to belong to Judge Blank, of Woodford?"

"Yes," answered I calmly, mastering my emotions at the mention of this dangerous subject, and looking at my brother-in-law steadily.

"Well," said he, resuming, "you know it was said that he must have passed through the village, and as he was seen not far from town, the patrol pursued him. He eluded them, but in doing so was compelled to throw away some provisions which he carried in a newspaper. These were carelessly picked up by one of the pursuers, and upon opening the paper it was filled with slices of bread and meat, looking quite fresh, and strange to relate, had a name in pencil upon the border of the paper. That name was yours."

"*Mine?*" echoed I, in astonishment, trembling in every nerve, but by an effort overcoming my embarrassment and staring at Willis.

"Yes, yours," he repeated "the scoundrel must have broken through your mother's pantry-window, and after helping himself to the food, taken one of your newspapers to roll it in—you often leave papers in there, do you not?"

"O, yes," exclaimed I, with a strange feeling of relief, "they frequently leave old ones there to protect the pastry from the flies."

"Just as I supposed," continued my brother-in-law, greatly relieved, "that must have been the way the whole thing occurred, but you have enemies, my dear Edgar, malicious ones, too, who say that many persons think that these provisions were *given* to the runaway. I gave an impertinent fellow a caning yesterday for daring to circulate such an unfounded calumny concerning you."

"Thanks, my dear sir, grateful thanks. I regret, however, that you should get into trouble so soon after your connection with my family. I expect to leave the village, yes, even the State, next Tuesday. I cannot, of course, contradict such reports when they never reach me."

"The best course you could pursue, Edgar. I was going to advise this, but did not wish to wound your feelings. Should you require any pecuniary assistance I——"

Interrupting him hastily, I thanked him with tears of emotion for his generous offer, but declined accepting one cent from any one in charity.

"But as a loan, Edgar, my dear boy," he urged, taking out his purse.

"No, no, I cannot do that even—I have money, Mr. Willis."

"Well," said he, "whenever you need the aid of a loan, you must allow me the pleasure of assisting you."

I assured him that I would, and entreating him not to mention the subject to my mother or sisters—as I had been the cause of sufficient trouble to them already—clasped him cordially by the hand and left the room, to think more calmly of what I had heard. When I returned I found my mother and sisters talking and laughing gaily in the parlor.

Mr. Willis and Fanny were to stay to tea, and afterwards, they insisted so urgently, that Bel and myself promised to accompany them to their new home in the country.

We stepped into the low, luxurious carriage, and rolled off amid

the smiles and admiring glances of my mother and Helen. Passing through the busiest part of the village, and attracting universal admiration by the elegance of the equipage and high breeding of the horses, we soon reached the excellent turnpike which led out to Mr. Willis' place. The distance was but four miles; and amid sprightly conversation, in which Fanny, as a matter of course, took the lead, we soon rattled it off, and entering a handsome gateway, wound up through native forest trees and tangled, luxuriant masses of shrubbery, to the mansion. This was my first, and, for the present, my farewell visit to Ashley Place.

The house was of brick, and had been built a number of years ago; but, having been greatly repaired and modernized, and elegantly furnished, presented a pleasant, comfortable appearance. Ancient ash trees surrounded it upon three sides, and behind stretched an extensive garden, divided from the pleasure grounds by a neat railing.

Peafowls stepping gingerly along the gravel paths, trailed their gorgeous plumy trains, and every few moments shrieked forth one of those discordant howls, which made us put our fingers to our ears. Snowy geese waddled demurely about, and lordly turkeys sauntered gravely by, as though overburdened with the thought of providing for their rising families.

"What a dear, delightful place you have here!" said Bel, gazing around in admiration as we alighted from the carriage.

"Country life is the pleasantest after all. I had no idea previously there was so tasteful a place about Millville," observed I to Willis.

"Haven't you recently fitted it up, Mr. Willis?" asked Bel.

"Yes, I have improved it somewhat of late."

"It was just as you see it when I came," said Fanny. "Come in and inspect the interior."

We entered, and she marshalled us through the parlors, the dining-rooms, and bed-chambers, and the other apartments, while her husband gave the servants some directions about the horses.

"This will be your room, Edgar." And my sister arranged the snowy, embossed counterpane, and threw open the shutters. "See, it commands a fine view of the pastures and distant woodlands. You must stay two or three days with us now, as you are going away so soon."

"I wish it were possible, dear Fanny; but I shall undoubtedly leave on Tuesday."

"But postpone it till Thursday, for I would not start on Friday—Byron ever believed that was an unlucky day on which to commence a journey."

"I have postponed it too long already; I must start on Tuesday."

"What sorrow it will cause us all! I sincerely wish you could remain with mamma. Will you be long absent?" she inquired sadly.

"I hope not, Fanny; but we'll not speak of it now, for you have not shown Bel her room yet. What a beautiful carpet! Who selected the wall-paper, Fanny?"

"Ah, you are a sad scamp, Edgar," said my sister, smiling in spite of her efforts to look sorrowful. "I hope you'll not stay away long, or the dark-eyed, wingless angel that sojourns at Mrs. Layson's will weep in sorrow."

"Angels, you know, have consolations that mortals are not aware of. By the way, when did you hear of that gallant Mr. Hunt, who entertains such high opinions of woman?"

My sister frowned as well as she knew how, and bit her lip saucily.

"Do not speak of him—I have forgotten the name, and you should not hunt it up for me."

"Excellent! I congratulate you! But where is Bel?"

"Stolen away, I presume," replied my sister.

And we went off to search for her.

"Ah! here she is, Edgar," shouted Fanny from the adjoining room, "reading Poe's 'House of Usher,' upon my word."

I hastened to see, and there was Bel buried in an arm-chair, trying to read as Fanny leaned over her teasingly.

"Throw it away, Bel, throw it away! I did not know the thing was in the house, or I should certainly have burned it for keeping me awake a whole night once."

"Burn anything that the author of the 'Raven' has written! No, no, Fanny dear!" urged Bel, holding on to the book.

"I must go down stairs and play the agreeable to Mr. Willis. You and Fanny can fight it out, Bel; but I charge you beware when the House of Usher falls!"

I left the room, and found my brother-in-law coming in at the hall door from the stables.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

My sister and myself left Ashley Place—as Fanny had christened her new home—the next day. Mr. Willis sent the carriage in with us. I did not bid them farewell, as they were to come into the village the day I was to leave, to see me off. It was now Saturday, and on the approaching Tuesday I should start for the first time from home. Although eighteen, I had never before been a week absent from my mother and sisters.

Time did not glide past—no, that is not the word—it *rushed* along. Sunday came, and I went to church with my mother. I sat in the old familiar pew, and looked up, as I had done in the calm, happy years of my boyhood, to the gray-haired minister as he gave out the hymn.

He preached upon the vanity of riches and the nothingness of the things of this world, and grew eloquent, for his fervency was real. With one foot in the valley of dark shadows, it was natural that he should look longingly to that other world, after passing three score and ten years in this. But had he been young and hopeful, and panting for a plunge in the sparkling river of life, he would not—thus blindly I reasoned as I sat and listened—have preached such a sermon; or if so, it would have been cold and spiritless, and have produced no effect. But it was over—the benediction was pronounced, and we arose to leave the house. I left my seat with sad regret, and looked at each familiar object yearningly and tenderly, treasuring and daguerreotyping the scene, so that when I should have left it, perchance—ah, no! I *will not* say *forever!* it is a mournful word—memory might recall it, and my soul still worship in the hallowed precincts, though the body was far, far distant.

It was Monday. I had not seen Cora for two days. This evening I should call to bid her adieu, for on Tuesday I would be hurried and busy with many things; and so I went as the dim, gray twilight was fading into night. It was a night of brightness, but of the stars, for no moon came vainly to outshine their sparkling brilliancy. I was shown into the parlor, and the servant went to bring lights. He returned and then left the room, and I sat alone, awaiting the approach of Cora, and absently watching the moths fluttering about the lamp.

A silk dress rustled in the hall, and a light footstep tripped buoyantly along. My heart fluttered, and beat audibly. She was at the door—she was in the room. I felt her presence, and——we met—it does not matter how; and when I led her to the sofa, by the window, our faces were roseate, radiant with happiness.

"I have brought the miniature, my sweet one. Do its eyes speak to you all the love and adoration that mine should?"

She opened the clasp, and approached the lamp.

"How life-like! yes, it is you, Edgar. The great sun is no trembling, toiling artist. With one flash he paints the features and lights them with the soul."

How her dark eyes sparkled! What joy, what glory to be loved by such a creature! I do not wonder that the sons of God, "seeing the daughters of men that they were fair," fell from the steeps of heaven to woo and love them.

"And now, Cora, where is yours? You promised me a picture of yourself, without knowing perhaps that I already have one."

"Impossible! where is it?"

"Pardon the deception: one picture is daguerreotyped upon my heart, the other—ah, and that is it. And will you place the chain upon my neck?"

I bent forward, and she threw it over me.

The golden case which enclosed the portrait was looked at, compared with the beautiful original, and then placed in my bosom.

"I believe my heart-picture is the truest after all, Cora. It

smiles, and looks tender and sad, and then laughs and sparkles, and the expression changes as a day in April; but this one never varies."

"You are complimentary this evening."

"No, I am only truthful."

"But talk of something else, Edgar. Say 'what a beautiful night it is,' 'it has been disagreeably pleasant to-day,' or something stereotyped. If nothing better occurs to you, discuss the weather, for, like soup at a dinner-table, that must always be first served before the other dishes come on.—And so you are to leave us to-morrow?"

"Yes," said I sorrowfully.

"I am really delighted to hear it," she observed, looking into my eyes with the most placid indifference.

"Indeed!"

"Yes, indeed! for then I shall have so many beaux. There is young Miller, the merchant, and Putney, the lawyer, and King, the doctor, and let me see," looking down thoughtfully—"well, I cannot remember the names of all the others now; but these are waiting, and as soon as you are gone, presto! what a belle I shall be!" And she laughed exultantly.

"Provoking little wretch!"

"Sir!" she demanded haughtily, staring at me with tantalizing calmness. "What did you observe, Mr. Trevor?"

She bent her head forward with patronizing condescension.

"Cora, you'll drive me mad! Are you in earnest, or is this but a masquerade to test my love, and show your power?"

"Drive you mad, Mr. Trevor! Heaven forbid! The asylum is now unfortunately under repair, and we would not know what to do with you. Do not, I beg of you, become deranged for a few weeks yet."

Sinking back in luxurious indolence upon the cushions of the sofa, and arranging her curls, she commenced fanning herself with the utmost self-composure.

"Dear me, how warm it is."

"I think it is quite cool," replied I, utterly confounded, and

completely at a loss to see the drift of all this strangeness of behavior. Two days could not have revolutionized a woman's heart; surely, though now since I remember a few moments unsettled Fanny's. Perhaps she has heard some calumny, some slander—but if this be so, why did she not exhibit the change when we first met. Very strange indeed—v-e-r-y.

I'll ask her.

"Have you heard anything—at least, I mean anything to my disadvantage since I last saw you, Cora?"

"Heard anything concerning you," she repeated, abstractedly, resting her chin upon her hand, as if striving to remember. "Ah, yes."

"What was it? Tell me, that I may contradict it."

"I heard that you were going away."

"Pshaw! you trifle with me, Cora."

"*I*, Mr. Trevor. What do you mean?"

"What do *you* mean with this detestable nonsense."

"Why, how stupid you are, truly; tell me, what did I say in the first place, Edgar?"

"That you should be delighted when I left town. That is pretty plain English, and as you seem to speak in enigmas this evening, I hope you'll favor me with a key to this one."

"I shall be rejoiced when you leave, for then time will test this love of which you talk so much. All men are fickle, and an impression made upon their hearts, is like that of a stone thrown into calm water. It tears it up at first, but then it gradually circles, spreads away and vanishes, and the water is again smooth and scarless, but the stone sinks and is forgotten."

"And does Cora think so ill of me? O how cruel to pierce my heart with such poisoned words. I know I am but a boy, but cannot a boy love, Cora? I know I lack experience of the world; but can the world teach me what I have learned of nature?"

"But yet,"—said she, hesitatingly.

"What, Cora? Only tell me that all your chilling remarks

were intended as a quiz to test me. Speak! you do not doubt me?"

She gave me her hand.

" 'Twas cruel of me, Edgar, but——"

" More of these doubts, what is it, Cora?"

Blushing and hesitating she murmured as I clasped her waist,

" I—I love you, dearest Edgar, and I dread that in the world you will forget——"

" Never, O never," I exclaimed, interrupting her with passionate vehemence. " Time will but strengthen our love, and two years will seem two centuries, till I c sp you as my bride."

Her head sunk upon my shoulder, and tears of upbursting joy sparkled within those wondrous eyes.

We talked for hours. Dreamed of the future and its radiant, years, and looked through rosy colored mists at life, and like two children, as we were, deemed it was all of brightness and of sunshine.

And when we parted, as the old clock ticking remorselessly in the hall with brazen clang, admonished us that the night was waning, she fell upon my neck with tears—I clasped her wildly to my heart, and as we tore ourselves away, she crowned my feverish lips with a warm, honied kiss.

CHAPTER XXXV.

TUESDAY, the tenth of October. A warm, pleasant day, with flecks of sunshine falling through the hazy autumnal mists of Indian summer. The winds wandered upon the earth, and their tones as they swept through the decaying leaves, were steeped in a sweet mournfulness. The hectic leaf of the maple fluttered with hope, and looked as though it might still live to rustle in its roseate splendors. It was one of those saddening days, notwithstanding the warmth and the sunshine, and all nature seemed whispering in low, monotones of decay and change.

I awoke with a heaviness upon my heart, not a figurative weight, but a palpable reality, that it seemed to me I could reach forth and touch, but could not pluck away.

The stage coach was to pass through the village late in the afternoon, and this I would have to take as far as M———, where we would meet the steam boat upon the Ohio river. The forenoon I spent in calling upon those friends whom I loved and respected, and bidding them adieu.

At dinner there was a slight embarrassment for a few moments, as I scarcely knew what subject to converse upon, and chatted away with an assumption of reckless gaiety which I was far from feeling. My mother and Helen, wounded and hurt by my not confiding my schemes to them, were reserved and sad, although they seemed striving to appear cheerful.

I remarked that I intended to stop in Cincinnati, and try and get into some wholesale dry goods house, if I liked the city. This a[illegible]nce interested my mother, and led to a great many sug-

gestions of the best way of going about it, together with a great deal of kind, motherly advice. My mother, however, was a woman of far too much tact and discrimination to annoy a son or daughter by overloading them with common-place and uncalled for advice.

The remark which I had let fall, pointed out to her, at once, the most probable direction of my endeavors.

This was only an after thought with me, and I observed Bel look towards me with a slightly expressed astonishment in her eyes, as I spoke. After leaving the table, we went into the parlor, and even Fanny—for she and Mr. Willis had driven in before dinner—found it rather difficult to keep up her usual gaiety and sparklingness of manner. Several times I thought I detected tears welling up in her eyes, as she would look for a long time at me, imagining I did not observe her, and then as I glanced towards her, she would turn hastily away.

My mother had arranged my clothes, and assisted me to pack them in the trunk. This was securely strapped, with my name painted upon the end, and set in the hall, to be in readiness when the stage coach called. We talked of many different subjects to prevent a blank silence, and I believe that every one of us felt that we were merely playing the part of masquers in endeavoring to keep up a running conversation, when we would all have much rather been silent.

After some time had passed in this way, my mother sent aunt Kitty to tell me she wished to see me alone in her chamber. She had remained in the dining room after dinner, to superintend and assist aunt Kitty in the removal of the dishes, and had not accompanied us into the parlor.

I arose hastily to obey the summons.

Entering, I found my mother seated at a small writing desk placed upon a table, near one of the windows. She turned as I opened the door, and I could see that her eyes were wet with tears.

"My dear, dear mother, I will not go if it grieves you so much."

I kneeled, and covered my face with my hands in her lap.

'No, no, it must not be, Edgar—I am weak and foolish to wish to detain you here. You should go out into the world and make an effort for yourself. Your course is manly—you are right to strive for success, for you have no father now." Her voice failed her, and she burst into tears.

We wept without restraint for a long time, and then my mother, regaining her composure, again spoke.

"I have sent for you, my dear boy, not to endeavor to dissuade you from leaving home, but to bestow a gift upon you. I have not wealth now, and my present is humble, but sacred."

She unlocked the writing desk, and took out a richly bound and clasped Bible.

"Take it, my Edgar, and when far distant, amid the turmoil and bustle of trade, or at night, when sad and lonely, it will bring you hope and comfort, and infinite joy."

Clasping the holy volume in silence, I arose and pressed my lips to my mother's forehead. Words are but vapid nothings when the heart is overcharged with emotion. They are like the wires of the electric telegraph, answering all ordinary purposes of communication, but when a storm of wild, tumultuous emotion arises, it lights upon words as the burning lightning leaps upon the wires, and finding them poor and weak, withers and consumes the frail interpreters, and cannot be transmitted.

Fanny came running in to say that she and Bel had been down at the front gate, and could hear the coach rattling along upon the hill, beyond the village. My mother and myself, at this intelligence, arose hastily and went to the door. It was coming, but as it would have to halt a short time at the post-office, to leave the mail, a quarter of an hour would elapse before it could possibly drive around for me.

I ran into my little room, where I had dreamed many a bright day-dream, and hastily surveyed its quiet seclusion, seeming still more quiet by contrast with my own excitement, but I could not bear to linger.—So I closed the door upon my boyhood—henceforth

I would be a man, striving for happiness.—*There* I had been happy, but alas! had not known it until too late.

My mother and sisters were gathered at the front door, talking hurriedly to Willis, and ever and anon looking hastily around to see what I was doing, for I affected to be busily running about, as though in search of something. I went from one room to another of our pleasant home, passing with nervous haste through them, but I was not searching for anything—at least, not for anything that could be found—I was only bidding the rooms a mute farewell before I left them.

"It is coming, Edgar! coming!" they all shouted, running in, "make haste!"

"Take the trunk out to the gate, Felix," said my mother.

"I'm ready," replied I, with an effort at gaiety.

"We must not cry now, when Edgar gets into the stage," said Fanny, "it will unman him."

"We will strive to appear calm," said Bel, "for Edgar does not require tears to convince him of our affection."

"And why should we shed them," added Helen, "it may prove the happiest thing in life, this leap into the bustle of the world."

"I do hope you will not shed tears," answered I, "for it will make me feel so sad, to think, afterwards, that I left you all in sorrow. If you would only smile I would like it much better."

"Here is the stage," shouted Felix, and the lumbering vehicle drove slowly up to the gate and halted.

I shook hands and kissed my mother passionately; then Helen, as she was the eldest, and Bel and Fanny. Tears burst into our eyes and could not be repressed, as the parting words were exchanged. I turned to hide my emotion, and clasped the extended hand of my warm-hearted brother-in-law. Aunt Kitty was waiting sorrowfully behind the group, and when I gave her my hand she wept and murmured, "God bless you, mas'r Edgar." The servants were strapping on the trunks—the stage-coach waited

"All aboard," halloed the driver, impatiently.

I ran down the gravel-walk and they all followed, except my mother, who remained sobbing tearfully in the door. Her grief was too sacred for the cold eyes of strangers, staring from the coach-windows.

"You must write soon, dear Edgar, very soon," exclaimed my sisters eagerly.

I sprang into the stage-coach—the driver cracked his whip, and the tearful, upturned faces, still lingeringly regarded me as the vehicle rolled heavily onwards. I leaned from the window to catch a last glimpse of my home, and saw, through the shrubberies, my mother still standing in the door, straining and gazing yearningly after me. A white handkerchief fluttered in her hand as I waved a parting kiss to her and to my sisters at the gate.

We dashed suddenly around a corner—we rolled onwards, we were gone. And I sunk back with a great, heavy, overpowering sorrow at my heart.

But up, up, quickly. See! that white cottage, embowered in clustering shrubberies. One upper window, opening upon a balcony, and canopied with climbing evergreens, stands open—just within I catch the flutter of a light dress; a head, in a cloud of raven curls, with dark, luminous eyes, bends intently forward and earnestly gazes into the stage; I waft a kiss, and my most eager eyes speak a wild, passionate farewell. She sees, she feels the electric influence, blushes, and with a jesture of impulsive, passionate sorrow, sends me a kiss and rushes away in tears and agony.

And all was over, and I alone! alone!

Onward dashed the coach, and the snorting horses, lashed into speed, rushed over the smooth, hard road, and when I looked up and opened my eyes again to all around me, Millville had vanished, and the sun had set, for we were long miles away.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A ROOM in the National Hotel, Washington City. A fire burning in the polished grate, for the morning is chilly. Elegant furniture ranged about the apartment, and the curtains of the windows looped aside, and looking out upon Pennsylvania Avenue, admit the cheery sunshine.

Eleven o'clock, and still I sit at the table, for, being a late riser, I breakfast in my own apartment. Sipping the fragrant chocolate and crushing the delicate crust of a French roll, I gaze in languid curiosity through the windows.

I had arrived late the night previous, and had not yet seen the city, and what little I now saw from the window disappointed me very much.

"You were a fool to stop here, sir," mused I to myself, "they will charge you two dollars and a half a day, perhaps three, when you take your meals alone; the state of your finances will not admit of such extravagance, it must be stopped, sir."

"Ah!" and I rang the bell.

"Did you ring, sir?" said an impudent Irish servant, projecting his red nose through the opening, and holding the door after him.

"Yes. Remove these things and enquire at the hotel-office if there are any letters for me—there is my card," drawled I with haughty languor, rising and wheeling my chair to the fire.

The fellow's insolence, which was so apparent when he entered, vanished instantly before my tone of calm, haughty superiority.

"Yes, sir, yes, sir," answered he, bowing obsequiously and leaving the room.

"These detestable Irish servants, why do they not have negroes?"

muttered I, stirring the fire angrily. "A person brought up in a slave state does not know how to endure them; if he treats them like human beings they will be sure to insult him by their overbearing assumptions, and one dislikes to speak to them as though they were slaves."

"Three letthers, sir," said the man, again entering and politely placing them upon the table at my elbow.

"Anything else, yer honor?"

"Nothing else," and I broke the seal and opened the first one.

"Beautiful mornin' out, sir."

I looked up with a cool stare of astonishment.

"I do not wish anything, sir. There is the door—when I want you I'll ring."

"But there is a small bit of a job to be sittled fur yit, yer honor," observed the fellow insolently.

"What?" asked I, putting my hand in my pocket.

"Fifty cints fur fetchin' the letthers to yer honor."

"Go to ——!" exclaimed I, naming a very warm place beneath the surface of the earth, and snatching the iron poker in a passion, as the fellow vanished like a shadow through the doorway.

I ought not to have made use of the expression, but it escaped me before I was aware.

Rising I closed the door, as the echo of his retreating footsteps died away in the long corridor. The letter I had opened was postmarked "Millville," and removing the small, white envelope, I read—

"Your warm, affectionate letter, dear brother Edgar, dated at Cincinnati, and informing us why you did not remain there, was just this moment received. I do not know that I should regret that you did not succeed in finding a place in any of the business houses there, for, I dare say, there is something better in store for you in the future.

"You cannot imagine what sorrow you left behind, dear Edgar, when the stage-coach disappeared from our sight. But I should

not tell you now—you may, perchance, be happy as you open this, and it would cloud the sunshine of your joy.

" No, no, I'll not tell you now. After you were gone, dear mamma wandered about the house as though you had been dead, and then it seemed as if the rattling of the coach, as it died away in the far distance, had been the clods falling upon your coffin. Ah, how sad and lonely we were that evening. We scarcely thought of setting the table for tea, and when we sat down there was one vacant chair, and though not dead, the dear one was far away. We were not hopeless, but only sad and sorrowful. I remained until past ten o'clock, and then Frank thought we had better be going home, but 'twas a pity to leave poor mamma, and I kissed her through my tears.

"And so you tell me you are going to Washington, and to write to you at the National Hòtel. My letter, I hope, will arrive there as soon as you do. Tell me why you are there—tell me all, be a dear, good little boy, and whisper to sister Fanny all those rosy hopes of yours. Mamma and Helen, and all of us, for Bel and I wept as long as any of them, are now becoming somewhat calm. And dear, good Frank (I have to thank *you* for him, Edgar,) was as much affected as any one. What a warm, noble heart he has, and how he idolizes me. I fear I do not love him as well as he deserves. (Yes, dear, in a second.)

" He wants me to tell him what cravat best becomes him, Edgar; wait a moment till I see.

" 'O, that one, by all means, how handsome you look, but don't kiss me again—why you'll make me blot Edgar's letter—fie! fie! Frank.'

" Well, now I'm back again, dear brother, but what was I saying to you? O, don't forget to write instantly, and tell us all about your trip. Isn't the scenery beautiful from Wheeling to Washington? Frank was afraid I would fall out of the cars gazing after it. And then the Hudson, the glorious Hudson! but I forget, you havn't seen that yet.

"Ponto, poor fellow, howled all the night after you left us, and mamma had to have him locked up in the stable. He knew, poor dog, that Edgar was gone, and would scarcely allow Felix to feed him. Helen asked me to bring him out with me, and here he lies, at my feet, and looks up as though he had a soul. But good-bye, dear, dear Edgar, I'll see you in my dreams.

"Fondly and ever, your sister,

'FANNY.

"*Ashley Place, Wednesday Morning.*"

"Dear, warm-hearted Fanny!" I ejaculated, kissing the delicate handwriting, and placing the letter gently in the envelope as I laid it upon the table. The next was stamped with my mother's well-known seal and I opened it eagerly.

"My own dear boy,—What happiness, what joy, to write to you and know that you are well. And have no accidents befallen you, my Edgar? And is your health still good?—be very, very careful of yourself, for you were always delicate, and do not forget to put on thick clothing in the climate you have gone to, for the winter draws on apace, and the days grow cold.

"The long nights come too, Edgar, but I cannot sit this winter in my cozy corner by the fire, and listen as of old to the dear voice that so often has charmed away the dull hours in pleasant reading. But Bella tells me she will take your place, and read to me while I sit and stitch, wondering at every thread if Edgar is cared for, and is happy. Do I not weary you, my boy?—pardon, but I cannot help it.

"So you are in Washington, the gay and dissipated capitol. I need not tell *you* to beware, it would be superfluous advice. I only speak to you—caution. By-the-bye your father has some distant relations residing in the city, whom I had entirely forgotten, until your letter from Cincinnati informed me of your intentions. Their name is Eldon, and I think I have heard that they are quite wealthy. Whether they occupy any official position, or what social rank they hold, I cannot tell you. The city is not so large, however, but that you can inquire. I would suggest the propriety of calling upon

them and introducing yourself, it might be of great advantage to you in many ways. As I do not myself know them I cannot give you a letter of introduction; but they know your father's name from the circumstances of his marrying a grand-daughter of a lord. This was thought rather strange at the time, and I have heard him speak of the impression it produced when he told them—for he called upon them when he first came to this country. Present my compliments if you succeed in finding their residence.

"We have been doing as well as could be expected since you left us. Fanny, dear, kind creature, is of great assistance to me, and I am indebted for many little luxuries and delicacies which cannot be procured in the village, to the graceful courtesy and remembrance of Mr. Willis and herself.

"Write to me of all your experience and hopes, and should you by God's good providence be successful in your anticipations fail not to instantly inform me. May the ministering angels watch over and shield you with the soft shadowing of their wings.

"The clock tells eleven—good night and happy dreams. God bless you, my own dear boy, is the prayer of your

"MOTHER.

"*Millville, Tuesday Evening.*"

"How wicked I was to utter that vile word in speaking to the Irishman and these holy breathings within the same room. Heaven and my mother forgive me, and I will strive to curb and subdue this passionate and sinful heart. Rest thou upon the table, whispering guardian of my footsteps." I laid the letter reverently by the side of Fanny's, and grasped the remaining one still unopened. Come! speak to me, thou mirrored aspiration of a distant soul. I pant for thee as the hart pants for the bubbling, cooling spring, for my soul is all athirst for love.

"Twin-half of my existence, soul of my breathing being! O thou loved one! could I exhaust the language of the love of mortals, still would I send you but the shadow of my heart. How long the days are, my own glorious Edgar, that bring not thy coming to my

yearning sight—how dark the evenings that your presence fills not with the halo of love!

"I cannot rest, I cannot study, I cannot read, for upon every page your dark eyes say adieu! adieu! as when I saw them last, rushing swift from me with the dashing stage-coach.

"And you in Washington? Why did you not tell me ere you left the village! Cruel! cruel Edgar, you do not confide in me, you shroud your inner heart to my eyes, and only open to me its public portals!

"Your letter, which I have before me, steeped as it is with passion and hot youthful love, cannot altogether palliate your (may I use the word, dearest?) no, 'deception' has a harsh sound of the world, I'll none of it, but say instead—forgetfulness.

"But I'll forgive you now—sin not again or my soul will sadden. Lately I met you in my dreams, dear Edgar—pray tell me, does *your* spirit remember? It was on last Sunday night, as mortals phrase it, but to our spirits only a drop of time out of the vast ocean of eternal being. I stood upon a gleaming cloudy mountain, amidst the throbbing glory of the stars, and methought my soul with weary trailing pinions waited for your coming.

"The world was far away, and seemed unto my spirit but as some distant star which once had been our home. I watched, it seemed so long a time, and strove so vainly to pierce the curtain of the boundless blue that dread impatience filled me, and I called you wildly.

"Ah! then I heard a rushing, as of mighty wings, far through the ether, and there soon appeared a gleam of snowy pinions beating with panting swiftness the circumambient air.

"I sprang, I flew towards you, and like two summer clouds we met far in mid air, and, clasped in one extatic long embrace, soared off to other worlds. 'This way, my Cora,' whispered your bright spirit, circling with burnished plumes far through the azure. 'Soar higher yet, and higher. See yon bright world on fire!' I followed you, and looked through a dim gulf of clouds, and far away in ether blazed a lone burning star.

"'It is the earth, my Cora, where we once lived and loved many long years ago. Come! plume we now our flight to distant worlds to revel in the bliss of joys divine, and offer up our orisons to God.'

"I spread my wings to follow you, my Edgar, and lo! *I* was but earth, and *you*—a dream!

"Speak! speak to me, assure me of your love in syllables that gleam electrically to my famished eyes. Adieu! adieu!

"CORA."

"She always dreams of heaven," murmured I mournfully, "what if she should die before me, and watch for my coming; watch vainly, perchance, and long, and I could never come!

"Away, thou awful thought, I will not harbor such a dark despair. But could I dare to pray for such an object—Spare me, O God, my Cora!"

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"CAN you tell me in what part of the city Mr. Eldon lives?" I asked, sauntering with easy indifference up to the clerk, writing busily at the desk of the hotel office, with a half score porters and servants surrounding him.

A small bell sounds snappishly, as though impatient fingers, waiting for water to wash themselves, were pulling at the wire.

Clerk looks up with a nervous jerk to see the number of the fussy little bell, then springs a brazen clångor with an air of martyrdom. Pock-marked Irishman shuffles hastily along with a small dust broom tucked under his arm, stops at the counter, and looks an emphatic question at the clerk.

"Up to number ninety-nine and see what's wanted—devil of a hurry."

Baggage car dashing impetuously up to the entrance, sends in a half dozen or more trunks, resoundingly upon the marble floor.

"Porter! porter!" halloes the clerk, "baggage—quick—out o' the way."

Then, dashing down his pen heroically, and bending forward over the counter, "what did you say, sir? Excuse me—such a hurry—yes, sir, have your baggage brought down in a moment—plenty time for the cars yet, sir—don't fret—be all right—number sixty-seven, Patrick, take up this package. Two brandy smashes for number two hundred—Senator Dongledon just got in—off to the bar in a jiffy, Michael—damn the bells! breakfast for number fifty-six, and four gin cocktails—must be dry."

Pausing for breath, and coming up to me, leisurely turning over

the leaves of the register, and waiting until the hurry was over, the exhausted martyr to the wants of the public again begs to know what I had asked him. I repeat the question, and snatching a wafer hastily and devouring it with a scratch of the head, he exclaims,

"O, Mr. Eldon! Yes—well, I guess he lives up over—no—Brown, where in the devil does Mr. Eldon live—gentleman here wants to know."

"Which Eldon?" asks Brown, picking his teeth consequentially, and swaggering up to me with his hands in his pockets.

The clerk dashes impetuously at his pen again.

"I do not know his christened name, unfortunately, but believe it is Charles. He is an old resident and said to be quite wealthy."

"Yes, I know him—got a pocket full of rocks, and a very pretty daughter too. Can't inform you exactly where he lives, though—any of the hackmen at the door will tell you. Think it is on —— avenue."

"Ah, thank you." And turning to the door, I soon discovered that every hackman upon the street knew where Mr. Eldon lived, at least, they said so.

"O, perfectly well, sir, perfectly, take you there, sir, in ten minets, sir—splendid hack, sir—step in."

But rightly supposing that he knew as little about the locality as I did, I very coolly declined "stepping in," and selecting a stylish turnout, and a driver with an honest looking face, I was soon rolling along Pennsylvania Avenue, towards the Executive Mansion, as they call the president's house, for want of a better name.

Past the dull marble monotony of the long facade of the Treasury Buildings, and rolling smoothly in front of the residence of our Republican ruler.—How gloriously the bright winter sunshine falls upon the city—how blue the sky—how white the far floating clouds.

Iron railings of clustered spears and battle axes, flit past the carriage window.

"What square is this, coachman?"

"Ah, Lafayette is it"—and that gallant war horse uprearing from the marble pedestal, and pawing the air in the majesty of his magnificent disdain. Hold a moment. Why, he'll leap from his pedestal. Curb him, O thou ungraceful rider, and throw thy awkward self into an attitude.—Mill's bronze statue of Gen. Jackson, eh? Drive on, coachman, I will see it again to-morrow.'

A short distance farther on and coachee springing from his seat, alights before the marble steps of a palatial mansion, and informs me with excessive politeness, that this is the residence of Mr. Eldon. I step out, and giving the driver his fee, mount slowly the flight of steps, and pull the bell handle. While the lazy servant is deliberating about answering the peal, I bestow an inspecting glance upon my apparel. Satisfied that my small boots fit sufficiently well, and that the bow of my cravat is inflexibly fashionable, I await patiently.

After a few moments, I was shown in, and learning that Mr. Eldon was at home, sent up my card, and throwing myself into a luxuriously-cushioned arm-chair near the fire, glanced carelessly around upon the splendidly furnished apartment.

"Mr. Eldon begs that you will walk up to his study, sir," said the servant, returning.

I followed him, and was conducted through an admirably proportioned hall, up a staircase and along a corridor, to the door of a room at the farther extremity. The servant opened the door, and I entered.

"Happy to see you, Mr. Trevor, very happy to see you," exclaimed an old gentleman with a fine bald forehead, mild, dark eye, and dressed in a rich *robe de chamber*, coming forward with an easy gracefulness and suavity of manner, and grasping me cordially by the hand.

I introduced myself as the son of the Edgar Trevor whom he doubtless remembered calling upon him many years ago, upon his arrival from Scotland, and who had married Madelaine Lindsay, the grand-daughter of Lord Balcour.

Mr. Eldon remembered the circumstance distinctly, and informed me that he and my father were cousins, or rather, he added, correcting himself, " I and your father's mother, who was an Eldon. Our family is distantly related to the celebrated Lord Chancellor of that name."

" Ah!" ejaculated I, with a manner of surprised interest.

" Yes—but take a seat, my dear sir, I am impolite to detain you standing," and he wheeled a capacious arm chair around to me and seating himself in one opposite, wiped with his handkerchief a white substance, like chalk, which appeared to adhere to his hands.

" I have been drawing some plans and specifications upon a blackboard here as you see," and he pointed to a large frame, "and my hands have become somewhat soiled."

It was a strange looking apartment that my eyes surveyed in glancing at the blackboard. Shelving extended all around the room, and reached from the floor to the ceiling. Books in rich bindings, rare and curious; books in plain bindings, well thumbed and worn; books in paper bindings, dusty, faded, and old; books, books everywhere, and all about the room, except where strange brazen and glass instruments, and queer, odd looking little models of temples, pagodas, and railroad cars filled the shelves, and crowded out the all-monopolizing books.

Just in the centre of the room, stood a large circular table heaped with periodicals, newspapers, engravings, drawings, etc. Another long, narrow table stood in a distant corner, covered with philosophical instruments, and chemical apparatus. The floor was covered with a soft, dark carpet, and from the domed ceiling descended a gas tube with two shaded burners. One large window opening upon a balcony, and looking to the east, lighted the apartment with a soft, mellow radiance. I observed all these luxurious literary surroundings as I looked up to the plans chalked upon the blackboard, and pointed out by Mr. Eldon's extended hand.

" And is your father still living?" inquired Mr. Eldon, resting his elbow upon the table and looking across at me, with an unconscious expression of admiration and interest.

"No, sir," I replied, with a slight tremor of voice, withdrawing my eyes from his, and looking through the window, "he has been dead several years."

"Ah, strange that I never before heard it. And your mother?"

"Is still well and living at Millville, a little village in the interior of Kentucky."

"You have just arrived in the city, then. Pray where are you stopping, Mr. Trevor? The National Hotel, eh?"

And rising, he rung the bell gently.

"Go to the National Hotel, James, pay Mr. Edgar Trevor's bill, and have his trunk sent up here."

"Impossible, Mr. Eldon, I cannot permit you," interposed I, blushing with embarrassment, and rising, as I gave the servant a five dollar note. "Pay the bill out of that, James."

The man took it, and Mr. Eldon, laughing good humoredly, added, "We'll have your trunk, anyway—don't forget that, James. You should allow me to pay your bill, too, my dear cousin—remember you are my guest."

Excusing myself, we commenced talking about family affairs again. I soon perceived that Mr. Eldon was restless, and as he kept casting his eyes in the direction of the blackboard, covered all over with zigzag lines and chalk marks, I apprehended that I was, perhaps, interrupting him.

"Do not allow me to detain you from your drawings, Mr. Eldon, proceed with them I beg of you, they interest me."

"Do they," exclaimed he, as his mild eyes lighted up with enthusiasm, "I am happy to know it, for I find so few to sympathize with me. They style me a visionary, for I live amid books and fold about me the drapery of dreams, but I—notwithstanding silly, ignorant rumors—dream of possibilities. See," said he, waving me forward with his thin, white hand, "I have been endeavoring to sketch a map of the wild and but partially explored regions between the Missouri river and the Rocky Mountains, together with the vast prairies and sandy deserts lying adjacent. You are puzzled, my

dear cousin—I see it in your eyes, although you are too well bred to ask me to explain what connection I can have with the unexplored regions of the Far West or the Rocky Mountains."

I smiled quietly.

He remarked it and continued with animation. "Since the first time I heard of the practicability of a grand railway to the Pacific Ocean, I have been an ardent enthusiast in favor of the scheme. I believe it possible, and you, my dear young friend, will yet live to rush upon the whirling rail-car far through the trackless, fertile prairies, the sandy deserts, the romantic valleys, the towering hills, and dashing with resistless speed through the wild gorges of the Rocky, snow-capped Mountains, see the boundless blue of the vast Pacific burst upon your vision. The traveler, fresh from the Atlantic steamship, who, as he steps upon the cars at New York, Philadelphia or Washington, and unfolds the daily paper before him, will resign himself in security to the luxurious ease of the boudoir-like cars, and after a few days of pleasant lounging, (I have not yet determined, exactly, how many days it will take for the trip) will step forth and sip his coffee with the balmy breezes of the Pacific fanning his temples, and listen to the roar of the breakers dashing upon the shore."

"A glorious dream! speak on, Mr. Eldon," I exclaimed, catching a portion of his enthusiasm as I listened to the excited speaker. "And when shall all this be?"

"It should be *now*, were men less blind to their own interests, and less incredulous as to the practicability of the magnificent enterprise."

"But it will surely take a vast amount of money to build this railroad, and who will furnish the capital?"

"The capital," repeated Mr. Eldon with subdued enthusiasm. "Aye, there is the rub—the general government should furnish one-half, and then we might very easily induce capitalists to take up the remaining stock; in fact, investments in it would be eagerly sought for. Eighty or ninety millions of dollars would be amply sufficient

to build the whole road and equip the cars to run upon it. And what is ninety millions of dollars in comparison with the immense pecuniary, social, moral and religious advantages which would accrue to the country from its completion!"

"The benefits would be inconceivably great, but the feasibility of the construction is what, I presume, deters men of capital from investing," I observed with timid suggestiveness.

"Why, the advantages are almost countless," continued Mr. Eldon. "Look what a trade it would open to us with China, India and Japan. We could import teas from China and receive them at New York for reshipment to Europe, before the slow-sailing vessels of the British merchants could wet their keels in the Atlantic, and what a source of immense wealth that trade alone would be, to say nothing of the moral and religious assistance it might be to the missionaries in spreading and diffusing the Christian religion. Then the other boundless sources of profit from different and diverse quarters that would spring up after the completion of the road. And as to the oft-urged objection of the practicability of the route, why, if I only had time, I could prove to a demonstration, that it is as easy as it is to walk across this room."

"But are there not two or three different routes suggested?"

"Yes, half a dozen almost, but the route which I have sketched out here," and he pointed with a cane to the black board, "is decidedly the best, and by far the most preferable in every respect. Ah, you should have been here a few days ago, when Col. Brunt and some other ardent friends of the enterprise called upon me. Such eloquence, such enthusiasm, and such indomitable energy and perseverance as the Colonel exhibits, is in itself worthy of the highest success. He has a speech prepared, he tells me, upon the subject, and the vast superiority of the route which he and I advocate, and this he will deliver in Congress upon the very first opportunity. If that body is not fully convinced, and every member that opposes the scheme silenced forever, why, I will say candidly—although I am not in the habit of making use of such expressions, Mr. Trevor—

that the Congress of the United States is composed of a set of incorrigible jackasses, and petty, contemptible demagogues."

I laughed approvingly, as Mr. Eldon pronounced the last words with emphatic vehemence, and stamped his foot upon the floor disdainfully.

"There are so many Peter Funk Buncombs in the lower house," said I, "that they overrule every measure which does not suit their obscure, little locality, and often lose sight of the national welfare by stopping to ask themselves 'what will the folks think of it in our district?'"

"That is too true, my dear cousin," observed Mr. Eldon, resuming his former calmness of manner, and motioning me to a seat as he carefully retouched his sketch with a piece of chalk, and then seated himself opposite to me at the table.

"Had it not been for some of these Buncomb gentlemen you speak of, Washington city would have been quite different from what you now find it," observed Mr. Eldon. "Every plan for the improvement of the place is voted down in Congress, as though the city laid out by the father of his country was only to be a temporary capitol, and, therefore, not worth expending money upon. Every time the Presidential mansion needs a new carpet, there are a set of demagogues who seize upon the occasion to make resounding speeches for Buncomb, against the extravagance of the Executive, and the aristocratic tendencies of the party to which he may belong. The servile party press, in all portions of the Union, take up the howl like a pack of well-trained curs, and so the President cannot have a carpet until the next session, if he gets it at all. Some of prominent residents of the city have been endeavoring for a long time to induce Congress to erect water-works. But no,—too much extravagance already—say these creatures.

"The burning of the Congressional Library, and the loss of a great many valuable public documents, which can never be replaced, has at length opened their eyes to the necessity of this national work. Only quite recently have some of them been agitating the subject

of the enlargement of the Capitol. The necessity of this addition is apparent to every one—the halls of both houses are notoriously too small, and so badly planned that it is impossible to hear anything when you attend the debates."

"Have they not appropriated something for additional wings to the present building?" interrupted I inquiringly.

"Well, I believe they have," replied Mr. Eldon, as though reluctant to admit it. "But the amount is so small that it will scarcely lay the foundation, and if they ever do get the basement built, I dare say some of the members will sit up all night to count the blocks of marble, and report a bill upon the extravagance of the building committee, in using them of such unusual thickness, when they might easily saw them in two, and thus make double the number, in this manner saving a vast amount of the dear people's money."

I laughed again, not so much at Mr. Eldon's remark, as at the vehement hostility he exhibited to the legislative body.

"And look at the President's house," he continued, sarcastically. "I believe they have at length succeeded in procuring a new carpet for it, and some new furniture, and this concession was very grudgingly admitted; but what does the house look like?—you have not seen the interior yet?"

"No, sir, I have not yet had time."

"Well, I'll take you over to see it, and venture to say it will remind you of nothing so much as of a great public hotel. There is one very finely proportioned apartment, the much talked of East room, but it has not a painting nor an object of art in it, if we except two little black Egyptian jugs upon the mantle. There is not a statue or a cast within the mansion, save one bust stuck up in an obscure corner—what it is intended for no one knows. Now is not this a disgrace to a nation of twenty-five millions, ranking itself in all other respects among the great powers of the earth! Surely it is. Where are your national galleries of paintings and sculpture? ask intelligent foreigners when they visit our city. I blush to tell them

we have no such institutions here. Congress cannot afford such monarchical luxuries—it might injure the cause of Freedom, and besides, would be imitating the rotten old governments of Europe."

"I thought there was some statuary about the Capitol," said I innocently.

"O yes, I had forgotten the big ten pin player mounted upon the eastern portico, and poising his ball for a grand ten strike. Do you remember, my dear cousin, if the biographer tells us whether Columbus was particularly fond of bowling?"

I assured him that I did not, at which he laughed contemptuously.

"Congress cannot purchase statues and paintings to form the nucleus of a grand national gallery, but the high-toned honorable members can allow fraudulent claims upon the government,—involving hundreds of thousands of dollars—to be paid, and then pocket their fees for the job. One of them —a gentleman from your State, I believe—wrote not long since to a particular editorial friend of his, that he was very glad that he was elected to Congress this session, as he expected he 'should make a great deal of money,' besides his regular per diem and mileage allowances."

"Yes, I have heard of it, but presume such instances are rare."

"Not so very rare," continued Mr. Eldon, with a sarcastic smile playing around his well-cut lips, "but the exposition of them is rare, and would not have occurred in this case, but that the dear editorial friend did not get an office which his congressional confidante had promised him, and so he hoists him up on his own petard. We are scarcely done laughing at the disclosure yet," said Mr. Eldon, speaking gravely and soberly. "It should not have been laughed at though, but frowned down and censured. By the way, it is late in the afternoon—four o'clock—at half-past four we dine. Allow me to conduct you to your apartment."

The kind old gentleman bowed with stately dignity, opened the door to allow me to pass out, and then leading the way along the

corridor, ushered me into a sumptuously furnished bed-chamber, where I found my trunk, and the change lying upon the dressing table, which the servant had returned after paying my bill at the hotel.

"I will call for you in a few moments," said Mr. Eldon, bowing again, "and take you down stairs to present you to my family."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"BRAVO!" cried I, in proud exultation, sinking upon a luxurious velvet cushioned chair, "things go on swimmingly. How kind and cordial the reception was, and what a favorable impression I have produced already. Queer old fellow that Mr. Eldon—somewhat given to riding hobbies, and quite an enthusiast, but withal, I must say I rather like him."

My principal object in coming to Washington, had been to see Mr. Eldon, for I had known all about him and his relationship to my father, before receiving the letter from my mother. I thought it somewhat strange that he had not inquired my reason for visiting the city, but at length came to the conclusion that he presumed I was traveling for pleasure and curiosity.

Soon rousing from these reveries, however, I walked to the large mirror, and could scarcely repress an exclamation of admiring astonishment.

"So Mr. Eldon has a 'very pretty daughter,'" murmured I, repeating the expression which the consequential Mr. Brown had made use of in describing her—"well, I dare say I shall"—tap, tap, tap, upon the door.

"Are you ready, Mr. Trevor?"

"Perfectly, Mr. Eldon," I replied, opening the door. And we went down to the drawing room.

I was presented to Mrs. Eldon, whom I found to be a fashionable distingue looking woman, several years younger than her husband, and save a scarcely perceptible hauteur of manner, quite pleasant and agreeable. Mr. Eldon also introduced me to his daughter,

Alice, a dashing, haughty beauty, of nineteen. He informed me that he had but two children, and that his other daughter, Mrs. Derby, was paying them a visit this winter, and had left her husband in Louisiana, upon his plantation.

Mrs. Derby, however, would not be in to-day as she dined with Mrs. Senator Sparkleton.

Dinner was announced, and passed off without anything of particular importance occurring. I made several attempts to engage Miss Alice in conversation, but generally received rather chilling replies, and soon desisted, to listen to her father, who commenced informing me that he had just succeeded in maturing an entirely new design for a railroad car, which should be suspended upon a single elevated rail, and not touch the earth at all. A friend of his, (Col. Loadley, of the engineer department,) had invented a locomotive, which was to be propelled upon the same kind of rail, and as there would be comparatively little friction, it was confidently expected, from some experiments they had been making, that this engine could easily be propelled at the rate of one hundred and twenty miles an hour, and perhaps, with even greater velocity. I need not speak of it out of the house, however, said he, as the patents were not taken out, and this was imparted to me in confidence. These cars, and this new locomotive were intended to run upon the great Pacific railroad, and congress had been petitioned to make an appropriation to test the elegibility of the new inventions. A few thousand dollars was all that would be required, and this, it was confidently hoped, would readily be granted.

"Papa is always boring us about the Pacific railway," exclaimed Miss Alice, pettishly, "I do sincerely wish it was completed."

Her father gave no heed to the observation, but continued speaking as though he had not heard it.

"How are you pleased with Washington, Mr. Trevor?" inquired Mrs. Eldon, after her husband had concluded.

"I have seen so little of it that I can scarcely form an opinion yet, but so far, it rather disappoints me."

" Disappoints you," repeated Miss Alice, bestowing upon me a cool, fashionable stare, " persons from the backwoods are generally extremely well pleased with the city. You do not have anything out West like it, I presume."

" I dare say the city will be quite gay this winter, Mrs. Eldon," observed I, returning the young lady's stare with a look of easy self-possession, and then turning to her mother, who colored slightly.

She replied that a very gay season was generally anticipated by the fashionables, and shortly afterwards we arose from the table.

" If you will walk up to my study, Mr. Trevor," said Mr. Eldon, " I will exhibit to you the model of the new railway car I was speaking of."

" But you will weary Mr. Trevor, my dear; pray allow him to remain with us, and show him the model to-morrow."

" As you please, Mrs. Eldon," replied the old gentleman with a stately inclination.

" As I may not see you again to-day, my young cousin, I wish you a pleasant and agreeable evening."

Bowing, I thanked him, and we went into the drawing-room, as he slowly mounted the staircase to his solitary study.

I almost regretted that I had not gone with him, but as Mrs. Eldon had claimed my company, I could not of course decline without rudeness.

" So you do not like Washington, Mr. Trevor—I am very sorry."

" I did not exactly say that, Mrs. Eldon—when I have seen more of the city, I think I shall be very well pleased with it."

" I hope you will—when did you leave Kentucky ?"

I informed her, and she then inquired about my mother.

" She was quite well when I last heard from her, and desired me, if I called upon Mr. Eldon or his family, to present her compliments."

" I should be happy to become acquainted with her," observed the lady, " pray isn't she in some way related to Lord Balcour? I think Mr. Eldon spoke something of it before you came down to

dinner, but I have such a bad memory.—Alice, my love, draw aside that curtain, the room is too dimly lighted."

"It pleases me very well, mamma," said her daughter, rocking herself languidly in a capacious arm-chair.

Mrs. Eldon frowned slightly, but Miss Alice still continued to rock with calm indifference.

"Excuse me, Mr. Trevor, for not paying better attention. Ah, a grand-daughter, you say, of the late, and consequently a cousin of the present lord."

"Indeed," exclaimed Miss Alice, her curiosity overcoming her hauteur. "And has your mother a coat-of-arms?"

"Assuredly," answered I, "being connected by birth with the most ancient of the Scottish nobility, she might, of course, assume armorial bearings if she chose to do so."

"Mamma, why cannot we have a coat-of-arms painted upon our carriage? Adelaide Smith has just returned from New York, and she says that all the first families there are getting armorial bearings to ornament their carriages, and many of them have their servants dressed in liveries also."

"And what claims have they to these distinctions?" said her mother with an ironical sneer.

"Why, they pay for them, mamma; there is a 'Herald's office' in Broadway, and I suppose they all get them there. Barnabas Snooks and Zebulon Hobbs, retired provision merchants, and Commodore Dunderbilt, of the fresh water Navy, all purchased theirs at the office. I forget what amount Adelaide said they paid for them, but it was not much, I assure you."

"Alice, my child, you speak ironically, do you not? These members of the 'very best society' of New York, surely, have more sense, or at least more self-respect."

"I tell the story just as I heard it—I am going to order the carriage, mamma."

'Very good, my dear, I presume Mr. Trevor will accompany us for a drive, to see the city and the public buildings."

I bowed and had no objections whatever.

"Are you an admirer of poetry, Mr. Trevor?" asked Mrs. Eldon, rising to change her dress for the drive, "there are some volumes of poems upon the table with which you can amuse yourself until we return. I am a great enthusiast for the Poets, and occasionally scribble a little myself," added the lady with a charming effort to be bashful.

"Ah," exclaimed I, "pray favor me with a reading of some of your verses.

"You will find a poem of mine in Gody's Lady's Book, lying upon the table before you."

I grasped the magazine eagerly.

"It is entitled an 'Ode to a Wounded Canary.'"

And Mrs. Eldon and her daughter left the room, Miss Alice going through the expressive pantomime—as she lingered behind her mother at the door—of turning towards me and pointing with one hand to the book I held, while she threw up the other as if to prevent herself from an overpowering yawn.

"Alas, how different from Cora," murmured I sadly, "and yet she is very beautiful." I opened the magazine and turned to the lines. They were smoothly, correctly written—punctuation all proper—sentences grammatical, but I did not yawn as Miss Alice had telegraphed me to do, and calmly read them through. When I concluded, I had forgotten what I had been reading, for they were not poetry but merely rhymed verses.

"The carriage is waiting, Mr. Trevor," announced the servant, entering. I arose, met the ladies in the hall, and attending them down to the splendidly appointed equipage, assisted them in, and with a luxurious, swaying motion, we rolled along the broad, smoothly paved, but hideously dusty streets.

"What did you think of the poem?" commenced Mrs. Eldon, after a few moments' silence. I had been dreading this question ever since we started, and as I must praise it, had been trying to recall some portions, but could not remember any of the lines;

what an oversight that was of mine—I should have memorized two or three in order to compliment them in particular.

"I think it extremely well done," said I recklessly.

"Extremely well done," repeated the lady in a tone of vexatious disappointment.

"Yes, the versification is very smooth and the rhymes excel lent."

"Indeed," echoed Mrs. Eldon sarcastically, leaning out at the window as Alice raised her handkerchief to her face.

"In fact," I exclaimed in desperation, "it is the finest poem I ever read upon that subject."

Surely that will satisfy her, said I mentally, as wiping the perspiration from my forehead and looking out as I saw Alice Eldon's eyes fixed upon me.

"I have been very highly complimented by several distinguished literary gentlemen of the city since the appearance of that ode, and the editor has written me a letter, urgently entreating me not to discontinue my contributions to the magazine," said Mrs. Eldon. I was interested to see what effect it would produce upon *you*."

"I feel flattered exceedingly, I assure you, madame.—Pray what large, white marble building is that across the square?"

"The Patent Office, did you say?—how very extensive it is."

After driving around the city and seeing all the principal public buildings, we returned at dusk very much pleased with each other.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

"How long do you expect to remain in the city, Mr. Trevor?" inquired Mr. Eldon, as I sat in his study the next day.

"I cannot tell, as it will depend upon circumstances."

After giving him this reply, I concluded it would be better and less embarrassing to inform him exactly what those circumstances were, and what I expected to do in the future. His gentle manners and amiable disposition assured me that I might hope for everything in his power that I could, consistently with my own self-pride, ask for. So I related to him my past experience of life, told him of my hopes and desires, and my expectations in coming to the city.

He listened with a pleasant, sympathizing smile, and when I had concluded, arose and grasped me cordially and affectionately by the hand.

"You shall not be disappointed in me, my dear cousin, nor ever rue the day you asked my advice and assistance to help you on in your praiseworthy exertions to acquire an independence—never."

I thanked him, and sunk upon a chair, infinitely relieved, now that I had 'made a clean breast of it,' for I felt previously that I had been sailing under false colors, and by my silence leading my newly acquired relatives to infer that I was a gentleman of wealth and leisure, instead of being a poor, wandering adventurer.

"Consider my house your home, Edgar—for so you will permit me to call you?"

"Certainly, Mr. Eldon, do not call me *Mr.* Trevor, it is so cold and formal, and I am yet so young."

"I will make some inquiries to-day or to-morrow, and endeavor

to procure you a post in some of the Departments, though I anticipate that this will be rather difficult. However, we will see, as there is no hurry about it."

"But, Mr. Eldon, I should not like to be a burden upon your hospitality any longer, than I can possibly avoid it. I fear I am intruding even now."

"Tut, tut, my dear cousin, do not speak of it. I have droves of servants here—no family—and want you for your company. Come," and he slapped me familiarly upon the shoulder. "Will you see my newly invented rail-car, now, the model is all ready and in working operation?"

"With the greatest pleasure, Mr. Eldon," (and the words were really true this time,) "I follow you."

He unlocked a door leading into a dimly lighted back room, and we entered. It was a small apartment, plainly furnished, and with a large oblong table in the centre. Upon the table, which was, perhaps, ten feet long, was erected a row of small upright supports, about twelve inches in height and one inch square. Resting on these, ran a horizontal bar of wood, about three-quarters of an inch in diameter, covered upon the upper surface with a brass rail. The framework was eliptical, and the extremities extended to each end of the table. Approaching a curtained recess in one corner, Mr. Eldon raised something in his arms which did not appear very heavy, from the ease with which he carried it, and bringing it forward with all the tenderness of a mother carrying her infant, threw off the large green cover which concealed it, and exposed to my curious expectant gaze, the miniature model of the wonderful, newly invented rail-car. I moved forward to examine it, and now understood what the frame-work upon the table was intended for.

"The cars, you will perceive, my dear cousin, are constructed upon the principle of pannier's baskets, which are hung upon mules in some countries, for carrying produce. The principle I do not, therefore, claim as original, only so far as its adaptation to this kind of locomotion is concerned. Here are four cars you see, two

being upon each side of the rail, and firmly braced by iron bands to each other The connecting frame-work, or strap of the pannier, if I may so term it, is the only portion of the car which rests upon the rail. This contains a groove fitting admirably to the single rail, and thus the cars when upon the track, rest one upon each side of the frame-work, and thus such a thing as running off the track, is utterly impossible. I will now wind up the locomotive model, which, for experimental purposes, is so constructed as to go by clock-work, and place it upon the rail, which you will observe it fits, the preponderance of weight falling upon each side, and not upon the central rail."

"Yes, sir, I understand it perfectly," remarked I, as he paused a moment and looked up at me. "But, Mr. Eldon, do you think that row of upright supporters upon which the rail rests, braced as they are upon each side, would be sufficiently strong to bear the weight of a locomotive, and train at full speed?"

"Assuredly, my dear sir," exclaimed the enthusiast, with difficulty restraining himself until I ceased speaking. "These upright supporters may be constructed of iron, of any diameter and weight that is requisite. They will be about twenty feet in height, so as to give a sufficient elevation to protect the cars from all obstacles upon the surface of the country through which the railway passes. This is one of the greatest advantages I claim for the invention.

"Among one of the host of objections urged against the construction of the great Pacific railway, is the impossibility of protecting the track from the depradations of the savage Indians, through a portion of whose country it will unavoidably pass; and also from the interruption of the thousands of roaming herds of bison and buffalo of the prairie. By raising the track upon elevated supporters, the train can pass along in safety, though the whole boundless extent of the prairie is one sheet of sweeping flame, and the infuriated herds of wild horses, bison and buffalo may rush with thundering tread beneath its elevated safety, as the startled passengers pause to survey through their eye-glasses, the sublime spectacle of a prairie on fire!"

"Bravo! it is glorious, Mr. Eldon, but"

"But what, Edgar? state all your objections, if there is any originality about them I may be instructed—speak out."

"In turning a curve—for I presume the track cannot be made perfectly straight—would not the momentum of the train, rushing at such an unparalleled speed as a hundred miles an hour, be sufficient to uproot the perpendicular supporters, and thus precipitate the cars to the earth?"

"Impossible," replied my companion, triumphantly, "I thought of that in the early stages of the invention, but the engineer will of course have sense enough to pass around a curve—if such things must be—in the same manner as they now do upon these slow and dangerous modern roads—by slacking the speed of the locomotive. For this reason I have constructed the model of the track in the form of an ellipsis. See! I place a weight in each of the cars to steady them, I touch the secret spring which sets the clock-work in motion—all ready—presto! away it goes.

And off the little model of a locomotive did rush in clattering speed, dragging the train of miniature cars after it as easily and steadily as upon a common road. Sweeping around the curvature of the rail with the easy elasticity of a serpent, it reached the terminus and halted.

"I believe as sure as I live, Mr. Eldon, that it will be triumphantly successful. I can see nothing to prevent it from operating with the same ease upon a larger scale. Permit an humble admirer to congratulate you, sir."

I bowed with expressed deference of manner, and the old gentleman grasped me cordially by the hand.

"I have had the best mechanics and engineers to examine the invention, and they all say the theory is unimpeachable, and from the working of the model, you will perceive yourself that the practical operation is equally perfect. What I now want is, that congress will appropriate fifty or sixty thousand dollars to construct a

model upon a larger scale, in the unimproved public grounds, so that my triumph shall be assured, and my name linked forever to the invention."

"And is there any hope of this?"

"Col. Brunt and many of my most influential friends in the House of Representatives, think there is good reason for anticipating the appropriation, as Congress wastes money enough for purposes of war, bloodshed, and the payment of fraudulant claims to occasionally honor itself by the setting apart of such a small amount for scientific and practically useful objects. I cannot tell, though, how it will be—there is great opposition in the House to the Railway, and the fanatics of the north and south may both oppose it, when they once commence quarreling over the slavery question As the wool begins to fly, this stupendous enterprise for the connection of the two vast oceans of the earth, will be ignored and forgotten."

"There is a man down in the hall wants to see you, Mas'r, to pay some money for rents," said a servant, timidly entering.

"Tell him I have not time now—to call to-morrow. I am always interrupted in this way, when I am employed with my models," observed the old gentleman with a slight irritation of manner.

I listened in astonishment, and gazed wonderingly at the man who refused to receive money. Surely, the age is progressing.

"And hark ye, James," added the disinterested gentleman as the servant was withdrawing, "never enter this room with your intrusive black face again, without first knocking at the door—do you hear that?"

"Yes, sah, I'll never do it again, mas'r," replied the boy in trembling accents, glancing at a ghastly skeleton upon wires, grinning from the partial obscurity of a distant corner.

"Now you can go, and do not forget my instructions."

"If Congress does not make the appropriation, Edgar, I think I shall be induced to engage in it myself, although Mrs. Eldon and my daughters will not listen to a suggestion for squandering sixty thou-

sand dollars upon such a chimerical project, as they term it—but, we shall see."

And Mr. Eldon carefully covered his pet model with the large green cloth. I offered my assistance to help him with it to the shelf.

"Thank you, Edgar, I can carry it, it isn't heavy."

And so it was cautiously placed away out of sight, and my companion, shaking the dust from his rich *robe de chambre*, led the way out of the apartment, and carefully locked the door.

CHAPTER XL.

"What kind of a place is Kentucky, Mr. ———?" drawled Miss Alice Eldon, with an air of fashionable languor, affecting to forget my name, as we sat alone in the drawing-room.

"Well," replied I, slightly imitating the drawl, and throwing myself back upon the luxurious arm chair, as I gazed abstractedly from me, "it is composed of about equal proportions of earth, and a substance called limestone, which very frequently rises up into hills, and these hills, as well as the adjacent plains and slopes, being covered with trees and grass, often present quite a picturesque appearance. It is a habitable country, and the people, I believe, are generally considered civilized, although in some parts, there are missionaries among them endeavoring to diffuse the light of the gospel."

"Ah, indeed," exclaimed the languid beauty, with irrepressible vexation. "And pray, which part did you come from? if I may be allowed the question."

"The interior, Miss Eldon."

"Are there any Indians or buffalo about that portion of the state?"

"Any quantity of Indians, or rather, 'Ingins,' as they call them there, but unfortunately the poor fellows are all dead, and can't feel the rude plows turning up their bones. And as for buffaloes—the only kind I ever heard of, were those in the Kentucky river—the buffalo perch. Some years ago the state was inhabited by an animal that it would take ten buffaloes to equal in size and prodigiousness. I have frequently seen their teeth, and they are just about the size of your head."

" Oh, horror !" shrieked the lady, shuddering. " Mr. Trevor, are you telling me the truth ?"

" Miss Eldon, do you impeach my veracity ?"

" But those horrid monsters are not now living in Kentucky, are they, sir ?"

" Pardon me, I think I said they lived there several years ago. Several *hundred* years ago I should have said."

" But what kind of people occupy the state now ?" continued the lady, becoming piqued and vexed at finding herself losing her temper.

" White people, mulattoes and negroes, besides a good many others, as the auctioneers say, 'too numerous to mention.' "

" Do they all resemble you ?" she inquired slily, " if so, it must be a great country."

" O no, they are generally better looking than I am, besides being a great deal taller—I, you see, am only five feet ten in height, and the majority of the Kentuckians are above six. I am scarcely fully developed, however, and may still aspire."

" Gracious heavens ! sir—you are a downright fool."

" Ah !" said I with imperturbable *sang froid*, placing my feet upon the grate, and crossing my legs like a knife and fork at a dinner table. " How delightfully pleasant it is here—pray who is that laughing so musically in the hall, Miss Eldon ?'

" My sister, sir," replied the angry beauty, with icy dignity, rising as the door opened. A lovely woman of perhaps twenty-three years of age, with soft, goldenly auburn hair, bewitching blue eyes, and a voluptuous development of person—attired in a fashionable low necked dress, ill calculated to conceal it—floated like a zephyr into the room.

" Mr. Trevor, Mrs. Derby," said Miss Alice, with cold haughtiness, seating herself at the window.

I had risen as she entered, and now bowed profoundly.

" Delighted to see you, Mr. Trevor," murmured Mrs. Derby, in a low, soft voice. " I regret extremely that you should have been a guest of my father's so long without my meeting you."

"And should not I also regret it, madam? I assure you that I do even more than yourself." And I offered her my chair by the fire.

"No, thank you, sit still, I'll seat myself at the window, for I dislike to be cooped up near the fire, when there is any sunshine to be seen. The air of a room oppresses me, and hangs upon my spirits—oh, how I envy you of the masculine gender, the privilege to roam free as the wind, anywhere, everywhere, over the world. And so you are from Kentucky, dear, delightful state. How many pleasant, charming people I know there, and then how beautiful the country, and what picturesque scenery. I have been at Lexington also, and what bevys of aristocratic looking ladies it can afford; but ah, I fear that beauty is all they can boast of, for I attended a party when I was there, and upon my word, I scarcely ever saw so many lovely creatures in one assembly before. I almost felt ashamed of my plainness."

In the course of the evening I was presented to one of the most intellectual looking women in the room, and engaged in conversation with her. After discussing many topics, we at length happened to speak of books, and romances in particular. The lady said she had never read many novels—her father did not approve of it, as he had heard of young ladiesbecoming lunatics from this cause.

"Possible," said I, in astonishment, "what delicate creatures. Pray, do you admire George Sands' writings, Miss Blank?" I asked, launching out into a most enthusiastic panegyric upon her genius, her sufferings, and her wrongs, and covering her sins with the fig leaves of silence. When I had concluded, amid a low murmur of applause, I turned to the intellectual looking beauty, as she inquired with charming naivete, "Pray, Mrs. Derby, is George Sands the same man that makes the celebrated sarsaparilla?"

I was forced to join the wicked story teller in her sparkling, bird-like laughter.

"I hope, Mr. Trevor, that all your Kentucky beauties are not so provokingly disappointing as the one I met with."

I assured her they were not, and in attempting to defend them, unwittingly let fall the name of one dear to my heart, at which Mrs. Derby eagerly seized, and repeating it in her musical tones, again filled the room with her laughter. I changed color, and the gay lady ceased, as a smile 'like the soft shadow of an angel's wing,' flitted across her expressive face.

"Pardon me, my handsome cousin, but you know married ladies have their little prerogatives. And we will battle for them too," she continued, "if need be, for we have a most accomplished champion in the city now. By-the-bye, she lectures to-night at Carusi's saloon—you shall accompany me to hear her discourse of our wrongs."

I promised to obey the command with pleasure, and Mrs. Derby anxiously inquired if I intended spending the winter with them.

"What happiness to be able to say yes—but I fear I cannot."

"And why?" asked my gay questioner.

I glanced around to see what Miss Alice was doing, and found her still sitting in motionless haughtiness by the window, with a book, which she seemed to be reading, and—yes, upon my honor—turned with the letters, poor things, all standing on their heads. She started and looked up, as if to listen for my answer.

"Circumstances which I cannot control may prevent, and perhaps engagements may come in also."

"Business or pleasure engagements?" demanded Mrs. Derby winningly.

I looked down, slightly embarrassed, for the question, clothed as it was in delicacy, nevertheless reminded me sensitively of my indigence, for I could not strictly say that I had engagements, either of business or of pleasure, when I knew but too well that the stern phantom—poverty, alone could govern my movements. How sad and heart-depressing to be reminded of your lack of wealth by some unheeded remark, often dropped by persons you are associating with upon terms of equality, and when surrounded by all the appliances of exquisitely tasteful luxury. I was saddened by the thought, and this was why I felt embarrassed.

"Do not answer me if the question is intrusive, Mr. Trevor—I fear I have wounded, but I meant only to persuade you to forego your engagements and remain with us."

"No, no, Mrs. Derby, not offended, but only embarrassed—I cannot answer you, for to tell the truth I have no engagements, either of pleasure or of business"

She regarded me with a strange, puzzled expression, as though she did not fully comprehend my meaning, but was too proud of her powers of discrimination to acknowledge it.

I relieved her charming embarrassment by saying (but O, what a heart-throb it cost me) "I am too poor to have either, Mrs. Derby."

Her heart was touched, and she would have given me a warm, sympathizing smile, and perhaps a word of comfort (but what choice there must have been in the selection of the language) had I not turned with haughty bitterness away. I was far too proud to receive pity even from a lovely woman—she felt this with woman's delicate, intuitive perception, therefore she gave me only—her silence.

"Will you have a gay season here this winter, Mrs. Derby?" asked I with my tone of former easy gaiety, after a momentary pause.

"Yes, if gaiety is synonymous with crowded balls and mixed, crushing parties, Washington will be excessively gay. But I must be candid and confess it, these things bore me. I like to take them in small quantities and broken doses, and then they are quite endurable, but an overdose nauseates the soul, and, amidst the senseless laughter of brainless coxcombs and the simper of soulless women, I pine for solitude."

"Indeed," exclaimed her sister, arousing herself and speaking for the first time, for Mrs. Derby had not sought to draw her out, "Pray when did this fit seize you, Evaleen?"

"Since last evening, when I attended a ball at the Russian Embassy, and met and was received with flattering eagerness by the elite of our Washington society. And what a society it is, when

one comes to analyse it. Broken down political hacks, who being so very fortunate as to succeed in persuading the dear, unwashed people into the propriety of sending them to Congress, straightway drag their poor wives from the obscurity of their country villages, to 'spread themselves' at Washington. Here their political position admits them into the best society, and many of the red-faced, awkward creatures often make me feel sorrow for them, when I cannot help but laugh at the same time. And them obscure *diplomats*, without a sufficient quantity of brains to make a figure in Europe, are shipped off to Washington as a kind of penal colony or diplomatic Botany Bay. Being often decorated with titles, they are the *creme de la creme* of our society, and, of course, take the lead in everything. Honorable Senators, and Cabinet ministers, must all keep open house, and whenever any of the unpolished but rich citizens of 'our district' come on, with their wives and unsophisticated daughters, they must, as a matter of course, be taken the rounds of all the balls, to see the elephant and hear the lions roar."

Mrs. Derby concluded with a warbling, bird-like laugh, but this time it was scarcely so musical as formerly.

"I wish we had a nobility of our own," continued the dashing lady, before either I or her sister could utter a remark, "and a court here; then there would be another state of affairs.'

"You speak treason," interposed I demurely, "but what kind of a nobility would you have, Mrs. Derby?—what should be the test?—the almighty dollar?"

"For shame, Mr. Trevor, you should know me better—the test—*merit* in all ranks and in every position.—I recognize no aristocracy but that of talent and education—I bow to no supremacy but that of genius. Should a great general capture a city, he should be a duke—for you know the world gives its highest honors to those who draw the most blood from it. Should a captain in the navy sink a noble vessel or tow her triumphantly into port, he should have the coronet of a marquis or an earl. For literary, artistic, and scientific persons—for, remember, the world does not rank these

so highly as the blood-letters—I would have lower grades of peerage. The poet who should strike the grandest thunder notes and draw forth the sublimest symphonies, should have the glittering coronet of an earl. The painter, the sculptor, the musical composer, and the scientific inventor or discoverer, should all be rewarded according to their dues, demagogues be banished forever from the land, and *statesmen* rule the realm."

"All hail to the coming millennium, which shall be ushered in with our monarchy," cried I with mock enthusiasm. "And who will be our first queen, or rather empress, for, of course, we are to have an emperor?"

"You need not make such sport of it, Mr. Trevor, for, jesting aside, I have heard numbers of sober, sensible people in this city and elsewhere, advocate a monarchy as a remedy for disunion and anarchy."

"Impossible, Mrs. Derby, it can never be, you may give the ruler all the power and even the salary of an emperor, but away with the name—uncover not the bauble of a crown, or the 'fierce democracie' will turn and rend you."

"I do not much anticipate the advent of such a state of affairs myself, but if we had an emperor, and could succeed in getting a wife for him from some of the royal families of Europe, it would vastly improve our society."

"Possibly," said I, sententiously.

"You think we had better make the best of our society, and keep our republic, do you?"

"By all means, Mrs. Derby, we should stand by the republic and defend the Union to the last. 'Tis better, far, to bear the ills we have, than fly to others that we know not of."

"Very well, so we shall keep the Union—'*Vive la republique!*' Do not, I beg of you, Mr. Trevor, report my treason to his Eminence the President," laughed the lady, rubbing her beautiful neck with a bewitching shudder. "I fear I could not bear the axe, and die like a Madame Roland."

The servant here announced dinner, and we left the room.

CHAPTER XLI.

"AND pray what did you think of Mrs. R's. lecture, my cousin?" asked the fascinating Mrs. Derby, entering the library where I sat alone by the fire turning the leaves of a magazine.

"I was greatly pleased with her. She gestures as gracefully and speaks with as much ease and self-possession as any man I ever listened to."

"O yes, that is all very true, but you equivocate—what do you think of her views as to the rights of women?"

"Well, I really cannot approve of all of them; for instance she claims the right of suffrage, and the privilege of holding office, besides the propriety of ladies becoming preachers, and lawyers—*you*, Mrs. Derby, do not hold this position."

She hesitated a moment.

"I cannot admit that I do advocate the right of suffrage, for I could not bear the idea of a woman crowding her way through a host of rude boors to cast her vote, though I dare say if we had the right we would have a separate place for our own convenience, and exclude all but females from it. But that is too progressive; when we get a great many of our more urgently needed rights we may then speak of that. As to preaching, I do not think it is so very improper, for the women among the Quakers preach, and I have heard some excellent sermons from them too, but as for turning us into pettifogging thieving lawyers, I must protest against that with all my ability."

"It is perfectly right that women should be doctors, and confine themselves to their own sex," remarked I, "for what can be

more indelicate and grossly immodest than for young ladies—as Mrs. R. justly observed—to be attended in a great many cases by men, as physicians and surgeons. Female physicians are greatly needed, and as the age loses a portion of this false modesty, women will be afforded all the facilities for acquiring a thorough medical education which men now enjoy and monopolise."

"Yes, that was a fine hit—did you remark the murmur of applause it elicited from the large, intellectual assembly? Several honorable Senators and members of the House smiled and nodded approvingly, and a great many that I know went there to laugh at a woman who had the courage to rise and lecture upon the wrongs of her sex, went away thoughtful, if not convinced."

"How eloquently she expatiated upon the injustice of the enactments relative to the property of widows, and even married women," continued I, as Mrs. Derby paused, "and how her voice thrilled and trembled with emotion as she named the law which divorces a man from his wife, and yet gives him the care of the children. Did you see the indignant scorn of her smile, as she demanded, in a proudly defiant tone, 'And do some men, aye—and I blush to say it—women too, sneeringly ask us what are our wrongs when they see these things, and know they are daily occurring in our midst?' And then how her voice wailed with such an irrepressible burden of sadness, as she pictured the possibility of hovering above each household in the land, and looking down upon the tyranny of husbands too beastly to appreciate the refined sensibilities of their companions, and to see the air of dictatorial command with which they were accustomed to speak to their wives, and order them about as though instead of marrying helpmeets they had married household slaves. Some men would not dare to speak to their housekeepers as they do to their wives, for they would instantly leave them, but the poor enslaved wife cannot, lest the world whisper in the ears of her blushing children, 'She is not any better than she ought to be, or she never would have left him.' And is not this but too true? we have all seen it, and such assertions prove themselves."

"Bravo! bravo! Mr. Trevor, we will crown you as our champion. But you have overlooked or forgotten the want of proper employment for needy women, a subject upon which Mrs. R. advanced so very many just and practical views. The time has come when woman must have something else than that one-eyed monster the needle, or the wash-tub, to depend upon for a support. There is the art of taking daguerreotypes for instance, which a refined lady might with as much propriety engage in, as to take sewing from Jewish Shylocks for a mere pittance. It is a pleasant, easy employment, and besides, very profitable, as I am told. Then setting type, selling goods in fancy dry goods stores, teaching school, practising medicine, and a great many other occupations that are now almost exclusively monopolised by men. But, alas! women never get as much for their services, even though as well performed. I never go into a fancy store and see a crowd of young men standing along the counter measuring off zephyry yards of lace and gauze, and cutting dresses of rich silk, and transparent tissue, but I feel as though I could break my parasol over their effeminate shoulders, and say to them, 'get forth to the occupations of men, O shameless pantalooned creatures, and leave to women the measuring of laces, and the rustle of silks."

I could not help wincing a little under this phillipic, for the lady's eyes—those soft blue eyes—flashed with scorn, as she stamped her delicate foot with emphatic disdainfulness upon the carpet.

With what exquisite taste she always dressed—how every color of her apparel, and every article upon her blended in such delicacy of contrast, and all, like some admirably adapted frame, contributed to heighten the effect of that central picture which was—Mrs. Derby. I could not but observe it, as she concluded, and looked so sweetly into [illegible] waiting eyes.

"I ought to be the last of the sex to speak of wrongs," continued Mrs. Derby, smiling, and speaking with graceful volubility again, "for my dear, good old husband allows me to do as I please, and as for spending money," and she opened her fine eyes incredulously,

"why there is no end to it, but Mr. Derby never lectures me about my extravagance, though the Lord knows I often deserve it."

"Your husband isn't in the city now?"

"No, he scarcely ever spends the winter here, as it does not agree with him. He escorts me to the North in the autumn, and then returns for me again in the spring, and as we have no little responsibilities," and the lady laughed slily, "we manage to lead a very pleasant life—at least I do, and Mr. Derby has such extensive plantations to attend to, that I presume he is just as happy as I am—if he is not, it is his own blame."

I stared incredulously, and then, as if suddenly aware of my rudeness, withdrew my gaze and studied the arabesque figures of the carpet. Mrs. Derby noticed the expression, nevertheless, and, laughing again with musical voluptuousness, she touched my arm gently with the tips of her rosy fingers, to attract my attention, and continued:

"You must not think me so silly as to suppose that I *love* this dear, good-natured old gentleman with the warmth and passionate ardor that I am capable of bestowing upon a man, for age has dried the marrow in his bones, and sunken his cheeks, and stamped crows' feet upon the eye-brows, while the trail of the serpent care has left its mark upon his high, bold forehead. His have not the youthful bloom and ripeness of your cheeks."

"And why, then, did you marry him—you so young, so beautiful, so wealthy, and so—— ?"

I paused as the soft, fair hand again thrilled me with its touch.

"He was immensely rich—papa wealthy, but tremblingly embarrassed—mamma ambitious—I young, giddy, and with no attachments. In assisting the embarrassed father, the Hon. ex-Governor Derby fell in love with the daughter, and from being the guest, became the son-in-law of Mr. Eldon. It would have been wrong, aye wicked, not to feel grateful to him for the honor of his hand. But could I, Edgar Trevor, at twenty, be expected to *love* a gentleman, howsoever talented he may have been, who was past fifty?"

The rosy-tipped fingers rested more heavily upon my arm, and the loving blue eyes looked inquiringly into mine.

"No, no," I murmured, as the castors of my chair rolled me nearer to the fair questioner, and our hands met strangely.

"Would that I had only met *you* before the marriage, my cousin, then had my fate, perchance, have been different!"

The fine head sunk back in mournful listlessness, and the bright azure of the eyes was veiled by the drooping lashes. The small, rosy fingers yet rested endearingly in mine.

I pressed them, raised the dimpled hand, and kissed it passionately.

The door opened noiselessly.

"Indeed!" exclaimed the astonished Miss Alice Eldon, using her pet word with prolonged emphasis, as she halted at the doorway.

Mrs. Derby looked up with calm composure as I dropped her hand, and threw myself back in the chair with a yawn.

"A beautiful tableau you beheld, my sister! Did you clasp it securely, Mr. Trevor?" and the lady raised her arm, and examined her bracelet with inspecting curiosity. "Ah, I dare say it will remain fastened; but I shall send it to the jeweler to-morrow." Then looking up wonderingly to her sister, "Pray, what led to your exclamation of astonishment, Alice?"

"The beautiful tableau I beheld," replied the young lady, imitating Mrs. Derby's tone, and sinking indolently to a luxurious seat.

'Pshaw! you are silly, Alice. Favor me with that copy of Shelley upon the table, Mr. Trevor—I must go and dress for dinner, as I dine out to-day. And may I also ask you to ring the bell at your elbow for James?"

I obeyed both commands, and the servant entered.

"Order the carriage, James, and request the coachman to drive the grays this afternoon, as I think one of the bays has injured his hoof."

The servant vanished to obey his mistress, and she, gathering her long dress rustlingly in front, so as to move freely, swept serenely out of the apartment.

"And so you were clasping Evaleen's bracelet, were you?" asked Alice Eldon, disturbing the silence by her disagreeable voice.

I affected to be profoundly absorbed in the obscurities of Carlyle, a copy of whose writings I had found upon the table.

"You are very studious, Mr. Trevor—reading Gulliver's Travels, I dare say."

"No, only a history of Bores. But, by Jupiter! I had almost forgotten an engagement to meet your father in his study at three o'clock."

"It wants but five minutes of the time," observed the lady, glancing at her watch. "You had better be off, if not too poor to have engagements."

"I must, positively. Pray, be so good as to excuse me, and accept my regrets for the pleasure I lose in dragging myself from your charming society." And bowing ironically, I gained the doorway.

"Wait a moment, Mr. Trevor."

"Ten, if you wish, Miss Eldon," replied I, returning with courteous politeness.

"Pray, did you *really* succeed in clasping that bracelet, Mr. Trevor?"

Could there be anything so very awful in a boy of eighteen kissing the hand of a married lady?

Turning haughtily, I left the room, and upon reaching the hall heard a long laugh of derision ringing through the library.

CHAPTER XLII.

I KNOCKED at the door of Mr. Eldon's study.

"Come in," said a voice, calmly, and I entered. He was walking restlessly across the floor, now here, now there. It was a happy restlessness, however, as was evident from the beaming smile upon his countenance.

"Take a seat, Edgar."

I waited for him to commence the conversation, but as he appeared abstracted, I spoke.

"Have you made any inquiries, Mr. Eldon, in relation to the subject we were speaking of?"

"Yes, it was of that I wished to speak to you. I called at the Navy Department to-day, and had an interview with the Secretary. He tells me that there are no situations that would suit you, and that there are hundreds of applications for office from every state in the union, and he scarcely knows what to do with them. So I concluded there was not much probability of getting you a berth in that quarter, although the secretary was exceedingly polite, and promised to do all he could to oblige me. I next visited some of the other cabinet ministers, and think there is some hope of getting you a lucrative post, in the State Department, as the Secretary wishes a quick, intelligent young man for some particular situation, but he must have one indispensable qualification—he must speak French fluently, and also be able to write it."

Mr. Eldon waited a moment for me to reply.

Unfortunately I did not speak the language. My teachers had been at great trouble in imparting to me a small stock of Latin, but had not considered French worth their notice.

"Then you could not fill the place. I regret this exceedingly, for your own sake, Edgar, as the post is one of honor and trust." Mr. Eldon looked very much troubled for a time, and the pleasant smile left his countenance. He gazed into the burning grate, and I sat and watched him in silence, bitterly lamenting my ill luck, and wearying myself in trying to imagine what my companion's thoughts could possibly be running upon, when he startled me by exclaiming with an animated gesture, "Ah, I have it now."

"Pray what, Mr. Eldon?" asked I, leaning forward excitedly.

"The secretary, Mr. W——, told me confidentially of the appointment of my intimate friend, Gen. Clarke, to be Ambassador to England, and now since I think of it, the General has no sons nor any near male relatives. He will, of course, want a private secretary, and you, Edgar, will suit him precisely. How fortunate that I should think of this—I will instantly write to him, and by to-morrow afternoon we shall have his answer."

I had no words to express my gratitude, but my looks were far more eloquent than language.

"Do not speak of it, Edgar, wait until the bird is in the hand, and then you may thank me, but not before. However, in our haste we are forgetting something of great importance in the premises."

"What, Mr. Eldon?"

"Your mother, my dear boy. How will she feel when she learns of your contemplated journey to, and residence in Europe?'

I had been thinking of that when he spoke, but was trying to persuade myself that my mother would not object to anything which would be so manifestly to my advantage, and promotion in life. Then Willis was a son now, and would be of far more use than I possibly could. There could surely be no objections to my going to England; but O, the separation, the long, long leagues of ocean which would divide us, and the dreary weeks of agony which would elapse before I could reach home, should any of the loved ones be taken ill The love of change and adventure, never-

theless, prompted me to look forward with longing eagerness to the probable success of Mr. Eldon's application, for as the private secretary of an ambassador, at one of the most brilliant courts in Europe, what opportunities would I not enjoy of seeing the enchanted world of high refinement and fashion. Of watching, even though as an humble looker on—the movements of the members of a society the most cultivated and aristocratic in the world.

"I do not think that she will object, Mr. Eldon," I observed as these thoughts passed in rapid review before me."

"I hope not, my cousin—your mother, I know, is a woman of far too much strength of mind to waste any vain tears or repinings at a short separation from a son, when that separation may—as the world terms it, make his fortune. No, no, she will be proud and happy to hear of it, Edgar. I will sit down and write to the General. Amuse yourself among the books until I get through; there is a newly engraved chart of the regions near the sources of the large rivers through which the great Pacific Railway will pass. The map is undoubtedly correct, and was made from the surveys and sketches of Col. Fremont."

I took the maps and sat down by the window to study them, for I could not avoid imbibing some of the enthusiasm of my benefactor in favor of this enterprise.

"There are some drawings of the passes and peaks of the mountains in the portfolio also," added Mr. Eldon, dipping his pen in the inkstand and smoothing the paper before him.

"Thank you, I will look at them in a moment, Mr. Eldon."

He dashed his pen across the paper and wrote hastily, then folding the note, addressed it.

"I will take it to the post-office, Mr. Eldon, as I am going there."

"But do not walk, order James to have a horse saddled for you, and whenever you wish to go out make use of him. Never think of walking in Washington or you'll waste half your time; this is emphatically 'the city of magnificent distances.'"

I left the room, not however without taking a courteous, commending glance at the drawings in the portfolio.

"Was I not becoming rather sycophantic?" O, dear no, for I really felt a great deal of interest in the contemplated enterprise, and the vastness and air of grandeur about the whole scheme dazzled and captivated my imagination, for *I* also was a dreamer, as well as my kind old friend.

Several days elapsed before we received an answer from Gen. Clarke, and I was becoming somewhat fearful that *my* great railway, which fancy had laid across the surges of the Atlantic, bridging its treacherous waves with such graceful ease, would perhaps prove as visionary as my venerable relative's.

At length a letter arrived. Mr. Eldon broke the seal impatiently and smiled as he read. I was, fortunately, present at the time, and waited to hear the contents of the epistle.

"Favorable, my dear cousin," cried Mr. Eldon, "the General has been quite unwell for some time past—in fact, his health never is good—and this accounts for the delay. He appears exceedingly eager to oblige me, as I have often been a valuable friend to him, and says he will accept you upon my recommendation, without farther ado. I congratulate you, my dear Edgar."

He rose and grasped me warmly by the hand. I returned the cordial pressure, and tears of joy and gratefulness stood in my eyes. I could not thank him in words, they all seemed so cold and expressionless.

"And now away and write to your mother, Edgar," said he, affectionately. "Present my compliments and kind regards, and tell her how much I dislike to lose you, and how I wish I had a son, such as she has."

I endeavored to command my voice.

"No, no, Edgar, not words, they do not express emotions—the eye, the countenance is enough for me.—*Au revoir*."

And I left the room, my wild heart panting like a curbed racer with joy, ambition, hope, aye—everything.

"Ah, I had almost forgotten, Edgar," called Mr. Eldon, coming to the door. "When you have finished your letters, come down to the library, as Evaleen and myself are going up to the Capitol to hear the debates, which are expected to be quite amusing. The theatre isn't open to-night, I believe."

"Yes, sir, I'll hasten and get ready to attend you; at what time will you start?"

"In half an hour—but do not hurry yourself."

CHAPTER XLIII.

OUR prancing steeds, biting, with foamy mouths, their bitts, dashed haughtily along, and the gay sparkle of Mrs. Derby's animated conversation was checked by the coachman reining up his spirited bays at the eastern portico of the Capitol. We alighted.

"How chilly poor Gen. Washington looks, sitting over there among the icicled trees, on his high Roman throne!" said Mrs. Derby, affectionately, as we mounted the grand flight of steps, and rested for a moment at the pedestal of a column.

"Nothing but a toga on, and his shoulders and noble bosom exposed to the pitiless elements. Poor, dear Father! I dare say if he could only get up and stretch himself, his marble statue would walk off its pedestal to get warmed. What an ungrateful country! Edgar, my dear coz, will you not take my furs to him?"

"Come, come, Eva, there will be a crowd in the galleries, I fear. We had better hasten," said her father.

Passing through the resounding rotunda, where every footfall is reverberated in innumerable echoes, I paused for a moment to survey the paintings, but was interrupted by the fastidious Mrs. Derby directing my particular attention to those wonderful *bas reliefs* over the entrances, in one of which Powhattan, with all his ribs exposed in the prodigiousness of his anger, is doing his utmost to crush the brains out of the knotty head of Capt. John Smith.

Amid great difficulties, we finally reached the gallery of the Hall of Representatives, with its ceaseless murmur and undertone of subdued "noise and confusion," and were so fortunate as to get a seat.

The Honorable Nebuchadnezzar Boggs, of Missouri, is upon his

legs, and appears to be using his lungs with very extraordinary industry, as he addresses the three hundred and odd gentlemen selected by twenty-five millions of freemen—and women, too—to represent their interests and watch over the safety of the Republic.

Strange as it may seem, I was pained to notice that Mr. Boggs, notwithstanding his energetic exertions to attract attention, was not listened to with the profound breathlessness that his subject seemed to demand.

"I tell you, Mr. Speaker," thundered the Honorable gentleman, throwing his arms aloft, "if this bill, which has been conceived in the diabolical dens of fanatical abolitionism, and hatched out by the incubation of the demagogues of an unprincipled party—I say if the bill aforesaid, which has been presented to the house by the gentleman from Massachusetts, is passed by this honorable body, then is this glorious Union, cemented in the blood of Bunker Hill monument, and rendered sacred in my eyes and the eyes of the people of the great State of Missouri, which I am proud—yes, Mr Speaker, I repeat it, proud—to represent, then is this bill, I say, calculated to overturn, to overthrow, and to demolish, and to cause the fragments of this once glorious Union to be scattered to the four winds of the antipodes! Ha! methinks I see smiles upon the faces of some of the friends of this bill; yea, let them smile. I for one will wrap myself proudly in the unspotted mantle of my integrity, and in the calm consciousness of having discharged my duty, shout, in the language of the poet, 'Go thou, good and faithful servant, and lie down to pleasant dreams!'"

The Hon. Mr. Boggs sat down.

A score of members who had been busily writing at their desks, utterly impervious to the liquid droppings of Mr. Boggs' eloquence, now sprang wildly to their feet, each one shouting at the height of his voice, "Mr. Speaker! Mr. Speaker!"

"What is the excitement, sir?" asked an elderly, fidgetty gentleman to me, as he rose with his daughter, and looked excitedly over the gallery

" O, nothing of consequence. The gentleman who has just taken his seat wants to dissolve the Union, and these patriotic individuals are trying to prevent him."

" I hope they will stop it," ejaculated the nervous individual, fervently.

" The gentleman from Arkansas has the floor!" cried the Speaker, striving his utmost to be heard amidst the horrid din and confusion, as he rapped upon the table energetically. " Will the gentleman from Indiana please to take his seat?"

The Hon. member from the Hoosier State reluctantly sat down, and left the floor to the gentleman from Arkansas.

Another long harangue, plentifully sandwiched with poetical quotations, followed on the side of the dauntless Boggs, and then, after a similarly exciting scene, the original introducer of the bill, a gentleman from Massachusetts, succeeded in maintaining his right to the floor.

He commenced speaking, but I could not distinctly hear him, as his tones were modulated with more refinement than the members who had preceded him.

" Does the gentleman mean to insinuate that I uttered a falsehood?" interrupted the representative from Arkansas, in an excited manner, springing to his feet, vomiting a quid of tobacco from his mouth, and dropping it upon the floor.

" I remarked, sir," said the first speaker, calmly, " that the gentleman from Arkansas, in making a statement which he did, is not sustained by statistical facts in so doing, and——"

" That is as much as to say that I lie, then," demanded the gentleman from Arkansas, again interrupting the member from Massachusetts, angrily.

" Order! order!" shouted the Speaker, rapping upon his desk. " The gentleman from Arkansas must take his seat, he is grossly out of order."

" Do I understand the gentleman to retract his assertion?" asked the Hon. Mr. Jones, of Arkansas, without heeding the Speaker's request.

"My remarks have been uttered, sir, and I am prepared to substantiate them by documentary evidence. I am not in the habit of retracting my statements, and the gentleman from Arkansas can construe them as he pleases," said the Massachusetts member with imperturbable composure.

"He has called me a liar, the d—— abolitionist!" yelled Mr. Jones, springing forward, as the entire body of representatives swayed and mingled in the wildest confusion and excitement.

The Speaker in vain shouted "order! order!" and commanded the sergeant-at-arms to arrest the gentleman from Arkansas, who, surrounded by a half dozen members, was wildly struggling to spring upon his opponent.

"I'll shoot him, the infernal woolly-headed abolitionist—where is my revolver?—give me my bowie knife," and the pugnacious Mr Jones seemed to foam at the mouth with envenomed rage.

By the exertions, however, of the surrounding members and the prompt sergeant-at-arms, the gentleman was at length quieted and persuaded out of the hall, while the undisturbed member from Massachusetts calmly proceeded with his speech.

"Do not speak of this scene when you go over to England, my young secretary," whispered Mrs. Derby with a sneer of contempt. "It would be insulting the dignity of the American Congress to mention it."

"Some one with a birch rod should take the fellow, Jones, down to the basement, and give him a sound flogging," said a quiet, plainly-dressed man sitting near Mr. Eldon.

"He is only slightly intoxicated," replied Mr. Eldon, sarcastically, "members cannot be expected to speak without some stimulant."

"If that man has the impudence to speak to me at the President's levee this evening," exclaimed Mrs. Derby in her fine, scornful manner, "I will stare him coolly in the face and 'cut him dead.'"

"Tut, tut, Eva," laughed her father, don't do that, or you will

have to cut a great many other members, and that would render you unpopular."

"No matter," replied the lady, "I shall do it in this case. Such a ruffian should not be received in polite society."

We arose to leave the gallery just as the Hon. Long John Wentforth, of Illinois, took the floor, from which he seemed to rise near seven feet, perpendicularly.

"Enough, enough," exclaimed Mrs. Derby, hurrying her father and myself along, "we must be off now, father, they should charge twenty-five cents to see these exhibitions; they are surely worth it.—How do you do, Mrs. Sparkleton, charming performance—wasn't it?"

"O, delightful," answered a magnificently-dressed lady as we passed.

'Why off so soon, Mrs. Derby?"

'Pressing engagements elsewhere; pray have me excused to the Hon. speaker!" And she uttered a low, musical laugh, and returned the bow of a richly-dressed, pleasant-looking lady, who was too far removed to speak.

"What lady was that who bowed to you, Mrs. Derby?" I inquired, after we had passed through the throng of the galleries.

"Lady B——, the wife of the British Minister—how she will laugh over this when she returns to London. Thank heaven it was not any worse! I have often seen them draw pistols upon each other, and once or twice shuddered at the sight of a glittering knife in the hands of some Southern or Western member."

"I have frequently read of such things in the papers, but are they not exaggerated?"

"Not in any respect. It has not been very long since I saw, from the gallery of the Senate Chamber, and (you are doubtless aware that the American Senate boasts of the dignity of its deliberations) in the midst of an exciting debate, in which the 'lie' was given several times—I saw an honorable Senator from Mississippi draw forth a pistol from his bosom, and deliberately

cocking it, point it at the breast of a distinguished and aged Senator from Missouri. 'Fire!' cried the undaunted Missourian, bareing his noble bosom and advancing defiantly, as the Senator from Mississippi demanded a retraction of some statement which had been made. But the bully was seized, the weapon wrenched from his grasp, and the aged Senator quietly resumed his seat. But dear me! it was a most thrilling scene, and had I been of that class of delicate females who imagine it looks refined and lady-like to shriek out at the sight of a spider, I should assuredly have fainted."

We paused beneath the stately portico to admire the art with which the theatrical statue of Columbus poised his marble globe, with an expression which seemed to say, "Did you ever see the like o' that before?"

"Where is the carriage, Mr. Trevor?" asked Mrs. Derby, looking around inquiringly.

"Ah! there it is just drawing up. Permit me to assist you in," said I, as we descended the long flight of marble steps.

"And are you not going with us, Mr. Trevor?"

"I wish to visit the Congressional library in the other wing of the building. Will you excuse me, for I have not yet seen it?"

"With pleasure, my dear cousin," replied Mr. Eldon instantly, but Mrs. Derby looked as though she did not altogether approve of the arrangement.

"Very well," she murmured, after a moment's hesitancy, "we will send the carriage over for you in an hour or two."

"Thank you. I would as soon walk however."

I bowed; the coachman touched his horses slightly, and the sumptuous equipage rolled noiselessly away.

Remounting the steps, I passed through the rotunda, and paused to gaze upon the large oil paintings in the panels, for they were the first pictures of the kind I had seen. Some of them I thought very fine, although I was ashamed to acknowledge it before the fastidious and critical Mrs. Derby, who had visited England, and made the tour of the continent. But before I made the

rounds of them I unconsciously found myself smiling as I stood in front of the battle pieces, and observed the angular stiffness of the figures. Then I looked at another, and saw the gaudy banners streaming wildly in one way, and the wind, as was indicated by the bending bows of the trees and shrubberies, blowing in a direction entirely opposite.

Hurriedly entering the library, I soon forgot these things amid the fascinations of the immortals of literature. Secluded in a recess, and absorbed in reading, I did not at first particularly heed the accents of a disagreeably screeching voice which seemed to be near me. After I had listened a few moments the persons who were conversing rose, and commenced walking back and forth. The voice appeared familiar, but where I had heard it, or when, I could not possibly remember. Perchance it was only a fancied resemblance after all, to some one that I had forgotten. But no, it was not an imaginary resemblance—I *had* heard that voice before, and had conversed with the person. If I could only see the man, that would explain the mystery at once.

As he did not seem to have any intention of coming towards me, I arose, and placing my hat upon one of the large tables, crossed the apartment, and affected to be looking for some particular book upon the other side of the library. Just at the moment the two persons who had walked down to the farther end of the room turned, and came slowly up. One of them I recognized instantly, although I had not seen him for several years. Once seen, however, such a figure could not be readily forgotten. He honored me with a casual glance as we met and passed each other, but I at once perceived that he did not remember me, or, if he did, it was not his intention to recognize the acquaintance.

"Should I make myself known?" that was the next question, or should I leave the place without revealing my identity? How little time had changed him—his hair might possibly be sprinkled with silvery threads, but all else was as when years ago he had clasped me by the hand at parting, and said with emotion, "God

bless you, little Edgar." The two gentlemen again passed, and I moved slowly away to the large window which commands a fine view of the city, the turrets of the Smithsonian Institute, with its dark mass of mingled specimens of architecture, the white marble tower of the Washington Monument, covered with busy artizans, the distant gleam of the waves of the Potomac, and the trees and shrubberies of the President's grounds. Gazing absently at this scene, some one approached behind me, I turned hastily, and as our eyes met, sprang forward and exclaimed—"Beelzebub!"

Our hands clasped impulsively.

"And this is the little Edgar Trevor, developed into a tall, handsome youth—what a metamorphose!

"How in the name of all that is mysterious, did you know me?" asked I in astonishment. "I recognized you at the first glance, but then you have not changed as I have."

He laughed.

"You left your hat upon the table, did you not?"

"I believe I did; but why do you ask such a question?" And I looked at him wondering what connection my hat could have with the easy recognition I had met with.

"I was glancing at some of the large books of plates upon the table, after my friend, the English minister, left me, and in turning a page had occasion to lift your hat. Seeing a card pasted inside, curiosity prompted me to glance at it, as I at once supposed that it belonged to the remarkable looking youth whose appearance had interested me as we passed. I read, and lo, I started in amazement, for the name was as familiar to me as my own. I followed you, and am here."

"And *your* name? exclaimed I eagerly, "you have not yet told me, and I cannot call you Beelzebub any longer."

He extended me a card, and I read upon its enameled surface, the name of "Sir Charles Crawford."

"And so you knew me, did you, Edgar? but who could ever forget such a deformed bundle of bones as I am!"

He spoke bitterly, and waved me to a seat in the recess. I fancied he did not like to stand, and wished to sit down, for then his deformity of chest, and the unusual length of his arms contrasting with the shortness of his legs, was not so easily discernible.

"And have you been in this country ever since we met in the woods of Aspenwold, Sir Charles?"

"No, no, Edgar, I have roamed over half the world since then. Have steamed down the mighty Mississippi, and wintered in New Orleans—penetrated the wilds of Texas, and hunted buffalo and deer upon its vast prairies—tired of this, and then traveled on through Mexico—been shot at, and robbed in its mountain passes, participated in its revolutions, and then left its anarchy to dissipate the winter in the gay Havana. At length, disgusted with civilization even in its ruder forms, I launched upon the Pacific, floated upon its dreamy waves, and cruised among the green summer isles of the tropics—danced in the moonlight with the naked maidens of Tahiti, upon the sandy beaches, and then plunged amid shouts of wild, savage laughter, through the dashing breakers, and revelled in the surf. But weariness and lassitude came upon me even in these happy valleys, where the bread-fruit and the mango wave in eternal verdure. I left them; and passing through the East Indian Islands, reached, at length, the sluggish current of the Ganges—I hunted tigers in its treacherous jungles, where the slimy folds of the serpent drag lazily along, and the deadly hiss of the Cobra di Capella alone breaks the sullen, hellish heat which broods like a sweltering sulphury mist over the land filled with the ruins of temples older than the flood. Excitement wearied and exhausted me—I returned once more to Europe, and sought for peace and happiness among my equals—did I say *equals?* what a base lie it is—why, Edgar Trevor, the poorest peasant that toils on my estates, is my superior, for God has formed him a perfect man. I reached my castle gates, and menials met me with cringing smiles—I passed the former home of one who might have made me happy, and gazed upon it with such eyes as Lucifer had when he looked from the surging fires of hell, up to the battlements of heaven."

Trembling with rage and bitterness, he ceased speaking, and grasped me by the hand. I attempted to calm his excitement, and as he seemed to listen to me as though I could give him peace by my gently murmured words, the snow, soft and pure as the down of angel's wings, commenced slowly falling without.

"Ah, peace! peace!" said the unhappy man, "nothing calms me like the fall of snow flakes—how like your mother you looked, Edgar, as you spoke—tell me of her, and your father, and your sisters—I landed at New York but ten days ago."

I began and informed him of all our troubles—of the sale of Aspenwold and the servants—the return of Puck and Felix, at which he smiled—the death of my father—here he interrupted me by his start and extreme agitation, which passing instantly away, left him with a smile of satisfaction upon his face, and something almost of joyousness in his manner.

He listened again attentively as I repeated the incidents of my life since my father's death, and the cause of my leaving Millville.

"And so you have met with unexpected success since your arrival in Washington?—I am happy to hear it—I congratulate you."

"Thank you, Sir Charles."

"And when do you leave for England, Edgar? I learn that the recently appointed ambassador is lying dangerously ill."

"He was, but is now recovering, and I presume will be able to undertake the voyage in a few weeks—he has written to me to hold myself in readiness."

"You will visit your grandfather, or rather your mother's aristocratic relatives in Scotland then, I presume?"

"I fear not, Sir Charles, my mother 'fell from grace' in marrying a commoner, and I dare say his present lordship would disown the relationship, if I were to call upon him."

"No, you do him injustice, Edgar; he is an intimate friend of mine, and I know will be happy to see you. I will give you a letter of introduction, however, and then you may safely present yourself."

I thanked him for the offer, and we then spoke of other things.

" The carriage is waiting for you, Mr. Trevor," said James, com ing up to me before I was aware of his presence. "I have been looking for you this half hour, as Mrs. Derby said you was in the library, and I didn't know precisely where that was."

" Very well, James—I will see you again, I hope, Sir Charles? or do you remain any length of time in the city ?"

" A few days only, and then I start for Niagara Falls and the lakes—thence to the West. Call at Willard's Hotel this afternoon. and dine with me if you have no other engagements."

" I cannot promise you now, Sir Charles.'

" Well, to-morrow—I shall expect you to-morrow."

We bowed, and I moved off.

" By-the-way, may I offer you a seat? I shall pass 'Willard's,' and am all alone."

" Excuse me, Edgar, I accompanied the English minister, and promised to await his return in the library—ah, here he comes—thank you. I deeply regret that the engagement debars me the acceptance of your kind offer."

He bowed again, and we separated.

CHAPTER XLIV.

I CALLED at the hotel the day after meeting with my strange friend, and walking up to the office, inquired the number of his room, and if he was at present in it.

"Sir Charles Crawford left here this morning, sir, to attend to important business in Philadelphia—will you favor me with your name, if you please?"

I gave him my card.

"All right, sir," said the clerk glancing at it. "Here is a note which Sir Charles requested me to deliver, should you call."

Wondering at this strange proceeding, I took it and broke the seal. It briefly informed me that business of importance demanded his presence in Philadelphia, and that he had received a letter after leaving me, which rendered it necessary that he should set out immediately. He begged that I would pardon him for breaking his engagement, and entreated me to accept a valuable diamond pin, which he enclosed.

When he would return, or when I should again see him, the letter did not inform me.

A very strange man, this Sir Charles Crawford, if that is really his name, and I scarcely know whether to believe it or not. He must be some person of consequence, or he would not have been treated with such marked attention by the British minister. A very handsome present at any rate, and I will wear it if he does call himself Beelzebub. I fastened it in my shirt bosom.

Several weeks passed away, and still I continued the guest of the kind and generous Mr. Eldon. Gen. Clark had not yet recovered sufficiently from his illness to be able to travel. At last ac-

counts, his physician informed us that he was convalescent, but it would probably be several weeks before he could think of embarking. I began to entertain the idea of returning to Kentucky, to visit my mother and sisters again before starting upon so long a journey, from which, perchance, I might never return. "But why go back, urged Mr. Eldon and Mrs. Derby—you have bid them adieu, you have said farewell once—true they did not anticipate a lengthened absence, but from what you tell us, it almost tore your heart strings to separate then, even with a hope of so soon rejoining them—why return now to tell them that you will be absent for long months—perhaps years, and thus render the next parting scene infinitely more harrowing than the last. "Besides," added Mrs. Derby, seconded by her mother, "it has been but a few weeks since you left home; you are just beginning to become accustomed to the absence—it is far better to stay with us until Gen. Clark is well. You must not think of returning."

So I abandoned the idea and remained.

Another week rolled pleasantly away amidst the excitements and pleasures of this delightful life, and I exclaimed in surprise as I undressed in my luxurious bed-chamber, "Why, upon my word, this is Saturday night—it seems but yesterday since it was Monday. I wonder what Cora is doing at this moment—wrapt in sleep and dreaming sweet dreams of me? or tossing wildly upon her pillow in pain, while the drear winter winds moan and wail without the windows, and the sleet and the snow fall fast and furiously, and the night grows dark and lonely! My dear, dear mother and sisters, are they all well and comfortable, and do they dream of happy isles and summer skies? In ten days I shall leave America. Thousands of miles of ocean—yes, *thousands*, picture it, think of it, with the storms, wild dashing surges, and all the dangers of the treacherous sea. Should our vessel be lost, and none ever hear of it—should they long watch for our coming into port, and strain their wearied eyes afar, over the sullen waves, that tell no tales and bear no sighs from their lost, drowning victims? "She sailed from the

port of New York upon a Friday, in December, and has never been heard from." Ah, never more! and thus the daily papers would chronicle the event, and the world would rush on and all would be forgotten. But would they not wait for me at home, would they not eagerly read every line of hopeful intelligence, and then throw down the paper to weep tears of despondency, to wipe them away again, and hope, ah, hope till death?

"But away with such forebodings," said I, courageously settling the pillows under my head, and tossing upon the bed, as a fierce gust of wind swept, roaring and howling past the house. The coal fell with a crash in the grate. I started up and rested upon my elbow to watch it, but it had burned out, and what had fallen was only cinders and ashes. The light was gone—there was darkness, and I slept.

"Beware! beware of her, my son!" I started and awoke, for I had heard a voice, but could see nothing. I sat up in bed—all was breathlessly still. The wind had moaned itself to rest, like a weary child, and the storm had ceased. I had surely dreamed—but of what! memory could recall nothing—vision had seen nothing, but my ear recognized the sound of that voice, and it was my mother's. Who could she warn me to beware of?—nonsense—it was no voice: and thus I reasoned myself to sleep as the clock upon the mantle slowly struck twelve.

The next day, which was Sunday, I attended Mrs. Derby and her mother to church. As we alighted from the carriage, upon returning, James met me and whispered mysteriously that Mr. Eldon wished to see me.

"Where is he?" I asked, in some alarm.

"In his study, sir."

I ran up stairs and entered, without knocking. Mr. Eldon, seated in his capacious arm-chair, his face covered with his hands, seemed overcome with emotion. An open letter, sealed with black, lay upon the table before him. I approached; he looked up.

'He is dead, Edgar, my poor friend Clark is dead."

He pointed to the letter. I grasped it, I read, as though in a dream, and when I had perused the last line it fell from my hand, and my bright, budding hopes, like fruit nipped by an untimely frost in spring-time, grew black as the seal of the fatal epistle.

Mr. Eldon did not speak, and, respecting his silence, I noiselessly reached the door and closed it after me.

"Ah, 'twas ever thus from childhood's hour." And muttering in bitterness of spirit upbraidings and revilings against the omnipotence of that Providence which had rebuked me, I sought my own room, and paced it in restless, vexatious anger. Not one thought of sorrow did I bestow upon the dead minister, for why should I grieve for those that were at peace, and removed from this world, where hope beckons us on but to endless disappointment.

Another month, and I was still the guest of Mr. Eldon. My long anticipated visit to England, which imagination had looked forward to through rosy mists, must be given up, for the newly appointed ambassador was a stranger to my friends, and the father of many sons. Mr. Eldon and his family urged me to remain with them, as some other vacancy would perhaps occur, and by being in Washington I would have a more reasonable hope of success in applying for it. He hinted something about adopting me also, but this was rather vague, and not precisely reduced to the form of a proposition. It was mentioned several times by Mr. Eldon, and once he asked me if I did not wish to go to college, for I was yet but eighteen, and acquire a collegiate education. Nothing, he said, would afford him more pleasure than to furnish me with the necessary assistance.

But I declined. My pride would not permit me to accept "a *charity* education," as I contemptuously styled it. Would I not then oblige him by accepting the money as a loan, and if I wished it, give my note, but I laughed outright at the idea of giving any one *my* note, and Mr. Eldon good naturedly smiled also. And so, on this occasion, nothing more was said upon the subject.

Not having received a letter from home for some time, I was be-

ginning to feel rather uneasy, as the silence was of somewhat longer duration than usual, and I feared something had occurred which they did not wish to alarm me by communicating. A loved one ill, perchance, and they waiting for the daily expected recovery so as to write to me, "Such an one *has* been ill, but is now entirely out of danger and convalescent."

We were at breakfast, and the servant entered with the mail; there was a letter for me heavier than usual, and of double postage. Hastily concluding my meal, I went up to my room to read it. The direction upon the envelope was in my mother's handwriting, the seal was her's also—I opened it:—

"My dearest Edgar: You must doubtless think I am a very long time in replying to your last letter, but so many strange things have occurred to us—or rather, I should say to myself—that I have scarcely had the necessary time to sit down and compose myself to write. I am even now at a loss how to commence to tell you, my dear boy, of an adventure which befell me recently. As I was sitting alone in my room, at the window, hemming a handkerchief for Bel (for she had been hurried, and did not have time to do it herself) and as I sat with my foot resting upon the beautiful footstool which you bought for me, my Edgar, and thought how happy you were among those dear delightful relatives of your poor father's, I mentally thanked God, and felt happy too. I believe, my dear boy, that it was a merciful interposition of Providence by which you were prevented from going to England, as I notice in the paper this morning that the vessel you would most probably have sailed in (had you gone at the anticipated date) was wrecked in a storm, and nearly all of the passengers lost. Thank God, you did not go!

"But I am forgetting the main object I had in view in writing to you. Pardon my digression. As I sat sewing alone in the house, for Helen and Bel had gone out to Ashley Place upon a visit, and so there was no one at home but aunt Kitty and myself, I heard a knock at the front door. Calling Felix, who was busily sawing wood, I sent him to answer the summons.

"He returned with a delicately engraved card, carried like an egg in his fingers, with a request that the gentleman whose name it bore would wish to see me. Picture to yourself my unbounded amazement, my speechless wonder, as I glanced at the card, and sitting in my humble little home in an obscure village of Kentucky, read the name of a titled and wealthy acquaintance whom I had known long, long ago in Scotland. And now, to receive him in such a house as this, I, whom he had met in baronial halls, the gayest and wildest of my associates! 'Tis true, my Edgar, I have become habituated to the plainness and simplicity of our residence, and as it is better than any of our neighbors, rather congratulated myself that I was so much better off than they, but now I could not but contrast this place with the one in which I had last seen my visitor. There was no fire in the parlor, for you know, Edgar, that our straightened circumstances will not permit us the extravagance of so many fires, and there is never any lighted except when we expect company—and that is not often *now*.

"'Where did you show the gentleman, Felix?' asked I, rising and smoothing my hair, (fortunately I had dressed myself that morning in a rich, black silk dress, which, I will tell you confidentially, Edgar—bend down your ear—has been taken out and made up five different times, to keep pace with the fashions.) I am sure you will smile at my economy. Felix replied that he had left the gentleman standing in the hall, and as all these thoughts, which it takes me so long to repeat to you, had really passed through my mind in a moment, he could not have been left there very long. 'Show the visitor into the front room,' that, you know, is where your dear father died, Edgar, 'there is a fire there, I believe?'

"'Yes'm,' answered Felix, 'Aunt Kitty told me to make one in thar, as the young Misses might be back, and want to sit thar.'

"My titled acquaintance was therefore conducted into this room, which, luckily, had no bed in it, as that had just been removed a few weeks before. I cannot describe him to you, Edgar, I despair of that, for he is a dwarf, has very long arms and short legs,

strangely shaped head, and large, protuberant eyes, but for all, you cannot form any idea of his appearance without you should see him. He was always very disagreeable to me, but then he is titled, and Sir Charles Crawford—that is his name—strange that I forgot to mention it before—with a rent roll of ten thousand pounds per annum, was always sure of admittance into the best society. As I opened the door and entered, he started from his seat, and with great agitation of manner, came forward to shake hands with me. I had not seen him since a few weeks before my marriage, when he had called upon me at Lochly Castle, where I was then on a visit to my grandfather, in the Highlands. There was very little change in his appearance, and as he congratulated me upon my youthful looks, I could not avoid telling him that if there was any very noticable change in him it was certainly for the better. He appeared highly elated at this commonplace compliment, and his eyes brightened and sparkled wonderfully.

"We sat down and talked for a long time of Scotland, of our mutual friends and acquaintances there, and of the changes which twenty years had made in society. I could not imagine how he had heard of my place of residence. Enquiring, he told me that he had learned at the village, near Aspenwold, that your father had met with great embarrassments, and it was supposed by his informants, that he had removed to Millville. And so he came here to see us for the sake of 'auld lang syne.'

"I could not invite him to remain to dinner, and so, after apologizing for the length of his visit, he rose to leave me, promising to call again. He was staying at the village inn, and punctually upon the morrow he made his appearance. I had had a fire kindled in the parlor, and received him there.

"He appeared more agitated than when we first met, and as I sat opposite to him, calmly conversing upon the many endless topics which our meeting suggested, I observed him start suddenly, change color, and then turn deadly pale. I was alarmed.

"'What troubles you, Sir Charles?' asked I with sympathetic

tenderness of tone. He became embarrassed, reddened, and threw himself passionately at my feet. I drew back haughtily as he approached me and detained my hand.

"'I love you, Madelaine Trevor, as fondly, wildly as when we first met, long, long ago—there is no barrier now to our union—Trevor is dead—earth to me has been a desert since the night, when, beneath a broken moon, I offered you my heart. You spurned me—you dashed me to the earth—you fled as though a monster had wooed you, and when next I heard of—for I dared not see you—Edgar Trevor was your husband, and *I* still, still your slave.'

"'Rise, Sir Charles,' said I coldly, 'I shall never again wed with mortal, I am still married, my husband has only 'gone before.'

"'Vain sophistry, Madelaine Trevor,' exclaimed he impatiently. 'I rise, but still my heart lies at your feet. I offer you my hand in marriage; time has not cooled my love nor the rust of years dimmed its brightness. 'This humble home—'

"'Leave me, sir—this is insult.'

"'Pardon! O pardon, Madelaine, it is love. This house shall be exchanged for the lordly halls of Cleverden Castle; this simplicity for the gorgeous sumptuousness of luxury; this village obscurity in which you bury yourself, for the excitements of fashion and London society; and this unknown name which you assumed with your youthful love, for the title of Lady Madelaine Crawford.'

"'Nonsense, Sir Charles, such things have no power over me now.'

"'But think of your children, Madelaine,' he continued, with passionate vehemence. Have you not a bright-eyed young enthusiast for a son—have you not two lovely daughters—can you bury them in this backwood seclusion, and wed them to some petty ignorant slave-owner, when you might by a word remove them to the dazzling circles of London? Think of your glorious ambitious Edgar, the idol of your heart! Can you see him sink into a grovelling tradesman, when by a word from your lips, Madelaine, he becomes my adopted son—is sent to Cambridge, leaves it with

laurels, and returns to the proud Lady Crawford, at her princely home, only to stand for Parliament, and gain yet higher honors.'

"I faltered; I gave way, my Edgar, before this picture of *your* future, and by *one word* from me, all, all would be reality. O what a struggle, what an agony of emotion! The pronouncing of one little word of three letters, and what a magic change would it not bring in our fortunes; what a gateway to fame and honor would that 'open sessame' not reveal to you! But, my Edgar, my dearest, my only boy, I could not say it—I could not sacrifice myself even for love of my children. I shuddered at the idea of giving myself, aye, selling myself, to such a disgusting deformity, and—can you—will you, my Edgar, ever forgive me?

"I—but I anticipate. He marked my wavering, he saw my hesitation—he was sure he had won me—losing all command of himself, with his devilish eyes glaring with passion, he sprang towards me—he seized my hand—he pressed my shuddering form to his bosom, and glued his slimy lips to mine. O my God, what a moment! I writhed within in his embrace, and with an effort superhuman dashed him from me, and stamped him to the floor. His mouth oozed with foam, but he was quelled. I cowed the monster with my indignant eyes, and with recovered haughtiness crossed the room and rang the bell.

"'Conduct this person to the door, Felix.'

"'May I—dare I, hope for pardon, Mrs. Trevor?—'twas but an ebullition of my—'

"'Enough, sir! Silence and leave me—Felix, obey your orders.' I left them in the middle of the floor, and escaped from the room by the back-folding doors. Pausing a moment, I listened. He muttered something incoherently, and in a few moments left the house. I told Helen and Bel what had occurred, but did not reveal it all to them. I could not tell you, my boy, were you beside me, and gazing into my eyes, but enough, it is over, and with an effort I am again calm and composed. Excuse me for a moment.

"I am back again, Edgar. A poor woman was at the door with

a wan sickly child in her arms. She asked in such piteous tones for bread that my heart melted as I loaded her arms. She blessed me, with her sweet blue eyes upturned to heaven, and I am happy once again. We will have to eat less for our dinner to-day; but the ravens that fed the Prophet of old, though not visible in these latter days, still wing their errands of mercy, and bring food to the believing. May God prosper and bless you—may He send his angels to guide your footsteps, and make your life forever a joy and blessing to your

"MOTHER.

"*Millville, Thursday Night.*"

"P. S.—Sir Charles Crawford still remains in the village as *Mr.* Crawford, a gentleman from London, traveling to see the United States. He has passed the house several times in his evening walks, but the door is barred to him—evermore. Write to me, my Edgar, and tell me that you forgive me for all I have lost to you. Breathe to me also your hopes and plans for the future, and soothe with the balm of your loved letters the soreness of my heart. My earnest regards to your charming friend Mrs. Derby, and also to Mr. and Mrs Eldon.—Adieu!

CHAPTER XLV.

Drawing a long breath of relief, I concluded this strange letter and laid it upon the table. I could not think—my mind was too full of confusion and tumultuous passion. Grasping the letter, I read it slowly over again.

"The lying, treacherous, deformed villain! See, how he deceived me with his craven apologies, and pretended a business visit to Philadelphia, when in his heart he had planned a visit to my unprotected mother. Gods! that I had the monster by the throat! To dare throw his snaky arms about *my* queenly mother, and touch his cancerous slimy lips to her mouth!"

I dashed the paper from me, and stamped the floor like a wild beast.—A knock at the door startled me.

"Come in."

And a servant opened it. Mrs. Derby wished me to accompany her in a morning ride, if I was not engaged.

'Tell Mrs. Derby I'll attend her in a moment."

Arranging my dress, and drawing on my gloves, I was about to leave the room in such haste that I was near forgetting the letter. I lifted it up from the floor, and smoothing its folds, placed it in my pocket.

"I must return to Millville and see my mother—perhaps this odious creature—whom she blindly supposes that I know nothing of, may yet remain at the village, and only await another occasion to insult her by pressing his suit." But then, after a second thought, I concluded to ask Mrs. Derby's advice in relation to the matter, even if I had to tell her all the circumstances connected with it.

We were in the carriage, the lady looking so bewitchingly lovely as the frosty air rouged her cheeks, and gave another champaigne sparkle to her blue eyes, which seemed waltzing with merriment, that I could think of nothing else. The past was forgotten, and I revelled alone in the present.

"Ha! a letter projecting from your pocket, pray let your cousin see it, dear Mr. Trevor? From your adoring Cora, is it not? Make me a confidant, will you?"

The low, soft voice was sensuously rich, and she leaned archly towards me, and plucked the letter from my side, with a smile so dimpled and roguish, that I could not resist her.

"It is from my mother, but you can read it; I wished to ask your advice."

"Ask *my* advice? my dear, confiding cousin, what happiness you give me. And shall I read all, Edgar? have you no secrets from me? What bliss to give you counsel—what joy to have your confidence. Drive slower, Thomas, the carriage jars me."

She unfolded the letter, and read as the equipage rolled noiselessly towards the adjoining suburb of Georgetown. I looked idly from the windows, and then slily contemplated my fair friend's ever varying expression of countenance.

"Bravo! what a noble woman—reject a British baronet with an income of ten thousand pounds a year, because she could not love him! 'Twas indeed heroic, but pardon me Edgar ——"

She hesitated.

"Speak on," said I, "it is your advice that I want. Shall I go back to Millville and resent the insult, by an attack upon ——"

"Folly, folly, Edgar, do nothing of the kind—what rashness to think of such a thing! But listen to what I had intended saying, and forgive me if I wound your feelings. You give me consent by that inclination—well, I proceed.

"Had I been in your mother's situation, outliving as she does, the memory of her first wild, passionate love, and yet in the meridian of life, I—do—not—know—but—that I would have accepted

the dazzling offer, and have given my hand, to such a wooer, when the heart lay upon a coffin—for it surely is delightful to be loved for years with such unceasing devotion as Sir Charles exhibits. I should certainly have fallen and arisen again as Lady Crawford."

"Even if the creature that sued for your hand had been a 'bundle of deformity,' as he calls himself?"

"In every hump I would have seen a lump of gold, in every glance of his eye, a diamond, and all these lumps of the sacred metal, and all these dazzling stones, I would have clasped to my arms and held them for my children—or rather my son—had I been blessed with such a one as you."

"Pshaw, Mrs. Derby, you jest with me. If you saw this creature, you would as soon think of allowing a crocodile to kiss your lips, as suffer him to touch you.

The lady laughed melodiously.

"Drive up, Thomas, and pass the carriage in front of us."

"Yes, Edgar Trevor, I advise you to write to your noble mother persuade her to accept this offer, and return to the gay circles she is so well fitted to grace—to even endure for a time, and hide her disgust for the sake of the brilliant future she opens up to you, and to your sisters."

"I shall do nothing of the kind, madam," rejoined I haughtily. "I would rather live and die an humble, unknown American citizen, than mount to a seat in the House of Lords, by treading upon a mother's heart. No woman with a heart would counsel such conduct—*you* have none."

"Ah, but I have, my proud cousin, see how it beats." She laughed mischievously. "It is warm, too," continued the gay lady, "and there is a picture in it—Faster, drive faster, Thomas!"

The coachman whipped up his horses, and the sound of their hoofs drowned Mrs. Derby's voice to his ear.

I listened coldly.

"And that picture is ——"

"The Hon. Ex-Governor Derby, of course," interrupted I sarcastically.

"Fie! naughty boy!"

"You, who could love a deformed dwarf for his title, and his gold, can surely clasp the skinny hand of an old man, and kiss his withered cheeks with infinite gusto, for every one rings like a dollar, and ——"

She closed my mouth with her hand, and gave me a burning kiss upon the cheek; then surprised, amazed at herself, blushed and looked down as Eve after she had eaten the apple. I colored, and fell back in the cushions. We sat opposite, but looked not at each other.

"Do you detest me? do you abhor me, Edgar? I shall lose all self-respect, but cannot help it. Passion carries me away from myself. I did not intend to betray my weakness, but my hand was upon your lips—your cheeks were so blooming and like a ripe peach, tempted me—and—and——" She hesitated, blushed, and stopped.

"I presume you did not bite the peach," said I, feeling my cheek with my fingers.

She smiled reprovingly.

"Edgar Trevor, I am positively afraid of myself when you are near me, for there is a something in your presence that acts upon my nerves like magnetism. I cannot overcome this influence,—tell me what is it. I see it even now in your dark, luminous eyes. I beg, I entreat you do not use this power against me! Do not come near me again—I cannot risk it."

"Did you not send for me, Mrs. Derby?"

"Yes, but then I was strong in self-command, for *you* were not present. Remember how I came near committing myself before Alice once, and that only the second time I had met you. We must never meet alone again: this is harsh, but you will comply with it?"

There were tears in those soft, liquid eyes as they pleadingly looked into mine.

"I do not understand you, Mrs. Derby, but I will obey. We shall meet no more."

"Except in some one's presence," she added, explanatorily.

"I agree to the compromise. Shall we shake hands over it?"

"No—I cannot touch your hand."

I drew back in haughty surprise.

"Is my hand poisoned, that you fear it?"

"Do not ask me to explain what you yourself know. Your hands magnetize me, or exert some mystic influence that is akin to this scientific enigma. But here we are at home, thank heaven! Put on your gloves, and assist me to alight."

Laughingly, I extended my gloved hand. We mounted the steps, and entered the drawing-room. I passed through into the library, and left her alone. After the lapse of a few minutes, I heard her leave the room, pass across the hall, and ascend the staircase to her own apartments.

CHAPTER XLVI.

TAKING a book from the shelves, I stirred the fire, and threw myself discontentedly into one of the luxurious chairs. The back of it was high, and as it was turned towards the door, I seemed hidden behind it. Opening the book which I had taken at random, and now perceived was a collection of old romances, I read :—

"And there once upon a time lived a beautiful ladye in a castle, and she was married to a baron older than her father. And this baron loved her, for she was wondrous fair.

"Her skin was like the ivorie, and golden was her hair.
"Her cheeks like two twin peaches ripening in the summer air."

"But this ladye was not happy, although she laughed, and sang, till the birds wandering about the stately castle, hushed and listened. So it happened once upon a day that her lord said, 'Madame, my love, I must hunt with my bold cousin, Sir Aymar, in the forest to-day; the red deer browze in wildness there, and none dare kill them.'

"So her lord went out with his hounds, his bugles, and his huntsmen, and the ladye 'sadly sought her bower, and played upon her lute.' And as she played there wandered a troubadour near by, and listened to the sweet, mournful strains that floated to him.

"'Tis some fair ladye in distress,—I will go and cheer her with my songs.'

"So the troubadour went, and he was very young and comely to look upon. And the baron's ladye loved him; and as he kneeled at her feet and sung, she sighed, and looked upon his nut-brown cheek and bright blue eye as she said to herself 'It canna be, for I am a wedded wife.'

"But the more the minstrel sang, the more the baron's ladye sighed for love of him. He swept the strings like the south winds blowing among the rose trees, and the ladye was charmed, and fell upon his neck, and kissed him. But, ah! sad to tell, the bold, haughty baron, who had listened, when he saw this rushed forward——"

I heard a light step behind me, started, turned, and the book closed and fell upon the floor.

"Why, Mr. Trevor, are you here? I did not expect to see you."

"I have lost myself in a book, Mrs. Derby. Has it been long since we separated?"

"Only a few moments; I did not note the time."

She sat down. I pushed my chair back, and rose to my feet.

"Pray, Mr. Trevor, do not allow me to frighten you off."

I resumed my seat.

"Mamma has just given me a new magazine with some of her verses in it—you are aware that she writes verses—mind you, I do not say poetry."

"Yes, I have been favored with a reading of some of them."

"Do you ever scribble any, Mr. Trevor?—For my part, I can never have the patience to sit down and write it out, or possibly I might patch up a very respectable magazine story. You should turn your attention to this."

"I have written a sketch, Mrs. Derby, and as the circumstances connected with it may, perhaps, amuse you more than the thing itself, I'll relate them—but I must have a pledge of profound secrecy."

The lady's eyes sparkled with interest.

"I promise, upon the honor of a woman, and here is my hand."

Starting forward, I hesitated and drew back.—"Remember our compact."

"Excellent, most excellent, my cousin.—I thank you—now proceed."

"Having nothing particular to do last summer, and tiring of endless ramblings in our 'pathless woods,' I finally determined, 'once upon a time,' to write a story. Well, I procured a quire of nice, white paper, and set to work in a secluded room up stairs—scribblers can never write well on the ground floor, you know—and very soon I succeeded in covering thirty-five or forty sheets of paper. I rubbed my forehead, perspired freely, (thermometer at 98°) dashed impetuously forward like a young, undeveloped genius, as I imagined I was, and finally came to the last page. The plot was admirable—the *denouement* dramatic, I can assure you—for I drowned the heroine in the Mammoth Cave, where she had gone to catch some of those eyeless fish for her lover's breakfast, and unfortunately fell in. The lover, distracted and tearing his hair, (very hungry too, after waiting so long) plunges in after her, but forgetting to take a guide, gets lost in the Star Chamber, and pines away upon a rock. He shrieks wildly for help, he raves, he rushes madly to the river Lethe, plunges into its waves, and as he sinks with a terrible struggle, the long, reverberating galleries echo and prolong his last wail of agony, and then the curtain slowly descends."

"Capital, but did you publish it?" asked the lady.

"Aye, there is the rub—I enveloped the MS. carefully and paid the postage—I believe that was a dollar—and sent it to Gunter's Magazine, at Philadelphia. After waiting, with an effort at patience, and feeding myself upon hope, of which I devoured a great deal, I at length received a huge packet from the post-office—postage unpaid.—'Phansy my pheelinks,' as Yellowplush would say, as I tore off the envelope, and lo! my manuscript returned unread. I swore revenge and prepared to execute my plans. Allowing three months to elapse, and then changing the title of the story, and writing the editor a long epistle—which I sealed with red wax and stamped with a crested seal, I once more returned the MS. to the same magazine. The substance of the letter which I wrote was this—'My friend, Alphonso Devereux, a youth of eighteen, and an illegitimate son of Sir Walter Scott, having lost all his money

and been taken sick, while traveling in the United States, had been my honored guest for six weeks. He now wished to return to his dear, native land, and as he was too proud to accept of charity, had requested me to offer the enclosed MS. for sale, the proceeds of which, he fondly hoped, would enable him to cross the ocean and rejoin his relatives in Scotland.' The MS. was entitled a 'Legend of the Mammoth Cave, by a son of the late Sir Walter Scott.'

"The bait took: the editor replied to my letter, thanking me for the honor I had done him, and promising to publish the story as soon as circumstances would permit. He informed me that he paid four dollars a printed page, and that Mr. Alphonso Devereux should receive the remittance upon the day of publication."

"And is it yet published?" inquired Mrs. Derby.

"No, I dare say I shall have to go to Philadelphia and jog the editor's memory. I still have his letter, however, and that is proof sufficient; and if he does not pay for the MS. I'll bring suit against him."

Mrs. Derby laughed and clapped her hands.

"Yes, bring suit, Edgar, that will be a delightful joke—get yourself into the papers and then you are a celebrity—a young lion, or rather a lion's cub."

"I'll not be a cub; I must have a full-grown mane and a resounding roar, before I exhibit in literary drawing-rooms. But to speak seriously, I do not know what I can do with the editor."

"Only wait patiently, he will be sure to publish it; he well knows that it will increase the sale of the magazine."

"It would not be the first instance of an American periodical riding into notice upon the back of a humbug," observed I quietly.

"Do not speak of it, rash boy, we *have* a Bourbon among us, and his name is—Williams!"

"Pardon, pardon, Mrs. Derby, I also am a legitamist."

"A truce to this, Edgar, and we will shift the scenes. I received a letter from my husband to-day, and he commands my return to the South."

"*Commands!*" repeated I, indignantly.

"Aye, commands." And the lady's proud lip curled with haughty scorn.

"And will the Honorable Ex-Governor Derby be obeyed?" I asked.

"Edgar Trevor, will you accompany me home?" she exclaimed abruptly.

I started in astonishment. A slight sound reached my ear, and I looked hurriedly around. It was only the rustling of the rich, heavy curtain in the distant recessed window.

"Why do you not answer?" continued Mrs. Derby, impatiently, rising and seating herself beside me.

"It would not be proper to travel so many hundred miles with only my escort. What would the world say, Mrs. Derby?"

"I care not what the world says—Edgar Trevor, I cannot overcome it, I cannot conceal it—I—love—you!"

She threw herself wildly upon my bosom. I felt her hot breath upon my cheek. I heard her heart beating tumultuously upon mine in the breathless stillness, and her head drooped upon my shoulder; the pouting, rosy lips were half unclosed, and her eyes swam in a voluptuous languor. Recovering my composure in an instant, I gently raised her light form—kissed her ripe lips passionately, and —— The drapery of the curtain trembled—moved—and the indignant Miss Alice Eldon stood haughtily before me.

"Your sister has fainted, Miss Eldon," remarked I, calmly, "you must have heard all that passed from where you were hiding, and can therefore judge between us."

"Leave the room, sir—instantly."

She rang the bell, and then hurried to the motionless form of her sister. I retired before the indignant anger flashing from her eyes.

"Miss Alice, for God's sake—for your sister's peace, be silent—you heard all—you saw it all—you know that I am innocent in heart, and I swear that Mrs. Derby is as sacred to me as a sister.

God sees into the secrets of my bosom, and knows I speak the truth."

"Leave the room, sir—I command you—this way—this door, my mother approaches."

Mrs. Derby slowly opened the languid lids of her eyes as though recovering from a dream. Her mother entered—I left the room.

"Poor Evaleen, mamma, came near fainting from the heat of the room, or some other cause. I was alarmed, and rang for you. She is better now—she is recovering."

I could hear no more, for the door was closed, and I alone in the desolate, magnificent drawing-room. My head burned—the air oppressed me, and seemed filled with clouds of lurid smoke and lightnings. Pressing my temples madly, I rushed from the house. I reached the street—I dashed recklessly along, seeing no one and heeded nothing. Passing through Lafayette Square, I walked hurriedly onwards, and soon reached the grounds in the rear of the President's house. The day was cold, though clear, and beautiful with dashes of sunshine. I threw myself into one of the open-work iron seats, upon a gentle eminence, and looked through the trees towards the waves of the silvery Potomac, shimmering in the winter sunbeams, and covered with the white sails of ships.

"O, madness! misery!" I stamped upon the turf, and clenched my hands to the open iron work of the seat. "Does some malignant demon hover forever above me, and when my prospects seem brightest, and happiness about to bless me, drive me with a flaming sword away to despair and agony! This foolish freak of Mrs. Derby's will banish me from her father's house forever, and turn my only friends into my bitterest enemies. Where, where shall I go?"

I could not sit—I could not rest. I rose and hurriedly walked the smooth gravel paths. Passing along, I came in view of the south front of the mansion. Approaching nearer, I saw a large window with the rich curtains looped aside, and within sat a lady, looking so weary, sad, and broken-hearted, that I involuntarily

paused to gaze at her. The sight calmed me, for the total abandonment to sorrow which that expression revealed, convinced me that there was other mournful agony, and more poignant grief in the world than such as afflicted me.

What if I should lose these dear friends? had I not the inward consciousness of knowing that I was innocent of evil or evil intentions! Mrs. Derby had perhaps injured herself more in her own estimation, than she could possibly have injured my prospects. She would loath herself after becoming calm and composed, and oh! how I pitied the lovely woman amid her self-abasement. *I*—unintentionally it is true—but still, *I* had caused all this trouble. My punishment, even if it should be the loss of the esteem of all her family, could not be too great. I would return, bid them a hasty farewell before they could learn all—for the malicious Alice certainly would expose us—and then leave them forever.

But where to go?—what to do?—I sunk hopelessly upon a seat. The sunshine vanished as I sat down, clouds obscured the brightness; the ships upon the broad river spread their white wings and sailed far away from my sight; the wind commenced to blow coldly, and rain drizzled slowly from the leaden sky. The river grew turbid, and as the rain fell sadly and drearily upon the desolate waves, the future—*my* future seemed mapped out before me as barren and lonely as that rainy river. Faster came down the rain—I left the grounds—reached Mr. Eldon's house, and entered it for the last time. Opening the hall door, I passed through and ascended the staircase. Arrived at my own room without meeting any one, I approached the dressing-table; a note addressed to me lay upon it. I opened it with a melancholy calmness, and my presentiments were fulfilled.

"Mr. Edgar Trevor, after what has passed in this house, will, of course, see the necessity of his immediate departure. As Mr. Trevor is presumed to be a *gentleman of honor*, he will let the dead past be forever shrouded in forgetfulness."

I packed the clothes in my trunk, put on my overcoat and gloved

my hands as I rang the bell. A servant answered it after some length of time, and I sent him for a hackney-coach. When it came, my baggage was sent down, and I soon followed. The hall was deserted—no one was visible, and I opened the front door and stood upon the white marble steps.

"Ready, sir?" said the coachman.

I nodded and descended to the vehicle. He opened the door obsequiously and stood waiting for me to enter. Hesitating a moment, I turned, with festering anguish in my heart, to cast one last glance to the windows of the house. Every one seemed barred with iron—the door to me had a huge padlock upon it, and seemed studded with bolts.—All was silent, and not a moving object was visible. About to turn away, I gave one more look and started in surprise; there was a face at an upper window—a face stamped with agony and tears.—O, God! I could not bear it. Springing into the carriage, I looked one farewell, imploring glance—the coachman whipped up his horses, darkness surrounded me, and the mournful eyes filled it as stars fill the night.

"Where to?" asked the man, as we passed the railings of Lafayette Square.

"Where to?" asked I of myself, and I pondered.

"When do the cars leave for Baltimore?"

"In half an hour, sir."

"Drive to the station—quickly."

The horses dashed off—the rain poured down in torrents—the slush and water of the street plashed upon the windows of the coach as we clattered down the Avenue—passed the large hotels—caught a distant glimpse of the dome of the Capitol, and the striped, starry banner of the Republic, waving above it—rushed round a corner, and drew up to the depôt.

The clock upon the tower struck the time for departing—the locomotive shrieked—my trunk was on board—the long train of cars began to move as I leaped upon the platform of the last one, and

wearily fell into a seat. Another prolonged, echoing, unearthly shriek—faster! faster!—clouds of black smoke and red cinders—a dreadful clatter—a roaring noise—a tumultuous jar—and with a leap like a loosened avalanch, we were rushing on! on! and Washington City was far in the distance!

CHAPTER XLVII.

Not knowing any one in Baltimore, I gave my baggage to a hackney-coachman, and directing him to take me to a hotel, I was set down at the Eutaw House, an immense red-brick caravansarie, and was informed that it was the "crack hotel." After supper I went to the theatre, for "the dead past must be shrouded in forgetfulness." The play was Othello, and at two hours past midnight I retired to bed and slept.

I lounged about the hotel three days, and tried to kill time by reading; wearied of this, I walked over half the city or more, then accidentally remembering, by seeing his works in the window of a book-store, that Edgar A. Poe had died here, I tried to find his grave. No one could tell me anything about it. He had died in the hospital, but he was not buried in the City Cemetery. O, no—that, with its trim shrubberies and gothic stone-gateways, was reserved for the carcasses of the wealthy beef-heads of the mercantile aristocracy. "Mister Poe was probably buried in the Potter's-field, among the paupers."

O, city of infamy, that suffereth such indifference to a child of genius! Rear high thy marble palaces and build towers upon thy peopled hills, but style not thyself proudly the "Monumental City," until this disgrace be wiped out and a tombstone even—if out of thy wealth thou canst not heap up a sculptured column—shall tell to the wandering stranger the last resting-place of one of the gifted of America!

Alas! what is fame, when it cannot give us bread, nor even a stone when we are dust!

Returning to the hotel from my fruitless search, I could not help thinking of the fine opportunity there was here, for some man of wealth to bring his unknown name into notice, and possibly render himself celebrated, by erecting a monument to Edgar Poe—thus linking his name to that of genius, which does not perish, as bales of merchandise, nor rot, like fine linen.

Having had no definite object in coming to Baltimore, now that I was here, it perplexed me to know what to do. It was necessary, however, that I should remove from my present quarters, as I could not afford the extravagance of paying twelve or fifteen dollars a week for lodging.

Starting out in the afternoon of the third day in search of a boarding-house, I finally succeeded, after a long walk, in finding one. But what a change from the sumptuous luxury of Mr. Eldon's mansion, and the costly elegance of the first-class hotels! The room was on the fourth floor of a tall, dingy house, with small windows, very steep, greasy stairs, and full of angles and dark corners. The smirking landlady graciously informed me that I could have this apartment—which was without a carpet, and scarcely large enough to place a trunk in—for four dollars a week.

"It is high and airy you see, sir, and very healthy. You will have a fine view of the city also."

I approached and looked out as she raised the window. The view *was* very fine indeed—of back dingy streets and dirty alleys, running with filthy bilge water, and covered with broken boxes and barrels.

"A delightful, airy place—extremely healthy, is it, madame?"

"My last boarder occupied it a long time, and only left it because his health—which was very bad when he came here—rendered a visit to the country really a necessity."

I could not afford to pay a higher price than four dollars per week for a room.

'I will take it, madame. My trunk shall be sent here this afternoon. There is my name,"—and I gave her my card.

That night I slept in my new lodgings, and was startled from a deep sleep the next morning by the shrill, disagreeable ringing of a bell, that sounded as though it had a settled asthmatic complaint, and was endeavoring to cough it away. I sprung from bed, and as my feet touched the cold, carpetless floor, I shuddered, and dressed in haste.

Going down stairs, I entered the "sitting-room," and found it filled with young gentlemen with embryo moustaches, large neck-ties, and a swaggering air of counterfeit fashion—old gentlemen with cigars in their mouths, and middle-aged gents with calm hungryness upon their countenances, waiting for their breakfasts. The eating-room was down in the basement, and after circumnavigating a circular staircase, we descended to the dimly lighted apartment. The table I do not like to recall to memory. I did not eat much, for the coffee was black and muddy—the bread yellow, and over-saturated with saleratus—the steak decidedly tough, and the butter unpleasantly odorous, to say nothing of the flavor. The forks were all of bone handles, with two prongs, and the table-cloth a miracle of whiteness—at least it had been once.

After breakfast I seated myself in the sitting-room, which was, fortunately for me, now deserted. Nothing affects a person more keenly than a change of this kind in a large city. To be precipitated from an association with the best grade of society—for such society is always to be met with in an American hotel of the first class—even though you are not personally acquainted with any of them, still there is a soothing consolation to your vanity in knowing that you are enjoying the very best the city affords. And what a change to remove from such a place to a private boarding-house of the kind that I was in, and to know that it was the only one you could afford to go to. The life of refined, luxurious expensiveness which I had lived at Washington came up vividly before me as I sat in the deserted parlor—the only room where there was a fire—and looked around me at the shabby-genteel furniture, and half-worn second-hand carpet. Cursing myself, my fate, and

fortunes, and dashing the book from me which I had taken to read, I left the room and gained the street.

I wandered about from place to place, in the vicinity of the Washington monument, until weary of my objectless walk, I returned, with a feeling akin to disgust, to my boarding-house, and drawing the chair up to the fire, lifted the book from the floor where I had thrown it, and again attempted to read.

For the first time, I now noticed the title of the book—it was a treatise upon chemistry. Commencing idly to turn over the leaves, glancing occasionally at the diagrams with which it was profusely illustrated, and sometimes reading the explanations of them, I came at length to where it treated of carbon, the production of the diamond, etc., etc. This, strange as it may seem, interested me exceedingly, for it is a characteristic of human nature to wish to hear of that which they possess the least of, and I eagerly perused a long article upon the nature and component parts of the precious stone, upon the same principle, I suppose, that the poor, hungry Frenchman used to read long, luscious descriptions of roast meats, delicious puddings, pies, and pastries in the cook book.

The author stated that many efforts had been made to produce artificial diamonds, and as chemists knew that the precious gem was nothing but fine, unadulterated carbon, why should the production of a like substance be impossible to them? After harping upon this for several pages, the writer finally stated that it had been advanced by a French *savant* of great eminence, that if certain proportions of sulphuret of carbon and phosphorus were combined and placed under water, in a glass vessel, that after the lapse of three or four weeks, pure, dazzling diamonds would crystalize upon the surface of the compound.

This experiment, the disappointed writer stated that he had tried, and allowed the mixture to remain under water three or four months, and yet there was no perceptible appearance of the precious stone.

When I had read this far, an idea occurred to me, of such origi-

nality and speciousness, that I laid the book slowly upon the table, and looked absently into the fire. What if such a compound as this man speaks of, were subjected to a powerful current of electricity or galvanism, might not the shock produce strange, startling results, and the novel experiment be crowned with brilliant success? Only think of the possibility of being able, by such simple means, to produce diamonds in any quantity—'twas a dream of the Arabian Nights, realised—it was a wild, yearning hope of the olden alchemists gloriously fulfilled.

"The thing is worthy of an experiment, at any rate, and by all that is good, I will try it."

So off I went to a druggist, to purchase the necessary substances. Returning with them, I discovered that it would cost a great deal more than I could afford, to buy an electrical machine, or even a galvanic battery. At this thought the experiment seemed checked, and I prepared, reluctantly, to postpone it until my finances should be in a more flourishing condition. Nevertheless, the new idea continued to fill my mind, and I could think of nothing else. The dinner, I suppose, was excellent, for I was too absent minded to observe its deficiencies, and that night I dreamed of becoming immensely wealthy by a brilliant *coup dé etat*, to which Louis Napoleon's was as nothing. Next day, in strolling along the street, still filled with the bigness of my discovery, I accidentally passed an academy, and fortunately happened to remember that all these public institutions possessed chemical and philosophical apparatus, and that by making application to the principal, I might possibly obtain the use of a galvanic battery for my experiment. The suggestion was worth something, and I entered the building, and inquired for the professor of chemistry. I was directed to his room, and stated the object of my visit. The gentleman seemed somewhat surprised, and after hesitating and apologising, finally ended by saying that he did not like to have an entire stranger use his apparatus, as it was so very likely to be disarranged and thrown out of order. This cool refusal rather dampened my ardor, but in

no way discouraged, I called at several other Protestant institutions, and was in every instance flatly denied the use of the battery, although I proposed to come to the lecture room, and to repair the instrument if I injured it.

Only rendered more determined by the opposition encountered, I next applied to the professor of chemistry, in a Roman Catholic institution. The priest who filled the post was a venerable, saintly looking personage, with a countenance of calm, gentle benignity, and as I entered his unpretending room, in company with one of the students who had kindly accompanied me, he bowed with graceful politeness, and begged to know in what manner he could favor me. The young boy who had shown me in to Father Clement—for that was the priest's name—closed the door and left us. I stated the object of my visit—told him that I wished to make an experiment with some liquids, and had no galvanic battery to decompose them—that I had applied to several Protestant institutions, being myself of that faith, but had in every instance been refused the use of their apparatus.

The priest heard me with a sympathising, benignant smile, and when I had concluded, assured me, in his softly modulated voice, that nothing would afford him more pleasure than to aid me in the prosecution of the experiment.

"The battery of our institution is not, however, very powerful," added Father Clement, in a deprecating tone, "and is at present somewhat out of order, but I will arrange it to-night, and if you will call in the morning, sir, I can place it with extreme pleasure at your disposal."

He left his seat, and gathering his black silk gown about him—which he had worn in the lecture room and not yet laid off, courteously accompanied me to the entrance, and with a stately inclination that would not have shamed a French marquis, of the *ancien regime*, waved me an adieu. I walked along the streets with a springy, elastic step, for now in one day, I should be able to demonstrate the feasibility of my fondly nourished scheme. Passing by

the brilliant shop windows, I singled out the various articles of dress and luxury which I should be able to purchase in a few days. Then how gloriously independent I should be! I could travel over the known world—I could taste of every luxury that art could devise, or refinement invent, for my resources would be boundless. A few hours in my labratory, and I would walk forth loaded with gems of inestimable value. My secret should of course be locked in my own bosom, and none—except, perhaps, my mother—should know whence came this inexhaustible supply of wealth. I would reward the good Father Clement with a largesse that would amaze him, startle him from his calm, holy propriety, and then I would suddenly leave the city and go ——.

I found myself at the door of my boarding-house, and walked in, surveying the humble surroundings with a smile of self-complacent contempt, for to-morrow, if my experiment was successful, I would return to my former lodgings at the hotel. And what was to hinder it from being triumphantly so?—had I not pondered the theory of the decomposition of the substances thus:—the bi-sulphuret of carbon, a rare, transparent and colorless fluid, which I had found and purchased with difficulty, is composed of two parts of sulphur and one of carbon. By combining certain proportions of this with phosphorus, the latter substance would be dissolved in the sulphuret, and then by subjecting them to a powerful current from the galvanic battery, the sulphur and phosphorus would fly off in vapor or be inflamed and destroyed, while the carbon, pure and brilliant, would crystalize upon the pole of the battery, and this crystalization would, assuredly, be a—diamond! This was my theory, and I had succeeded in convincing myself, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that the substaeces could not be decomposed in any other manner, and that the disunited, liberated carbon, must, of course, crystalize into a diamond, for what was a diamond but pure carbon?

I could scarcely sleep the night before the day which was to usher in the exultant triumph of my scheme. I planned the letter which I would write to my mother, proclaiming with an easy affectation

of indifference my glorious success. I selected, in fancy, the gorgeous ornaments which I had seen in a jeweller's window, and which I had even taken the trouble to ask the price of, in order that they might be bestowed upon Cora. How magnificently would they decorate her regal beauty! Towards daybreak, my head, feverish and aching with nervous excitement, and my limbs wearied with tossing restlessly in bed, I finally fell asleep. It was late in the forenoon as I arose, and preparing myself with my precious compound of sulphuret and phosphorus—for I took the precaution to mix it privately, so that even the good Father Clement might not discover the secret of the combination—I set out for the academy.

Breakfast was forgotten—what could a person, big with a secret of far more importance than the discovery of the Philosopher's stone, care about taking so gross a substance as food, upon the eve of his experiment. So I made a virtue of necessity, and left the house without my meal, for the table had been "cleared off two hours ago," as the landlady informed me, "but if I wished it she could give me some cold victuals."

"No, I did not wish anything at all."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Father Clement was awaiting me in his apartment as I arrived.

"You are late, my son?"

"Yes, sir, I studied too long last night, and overslept myself. Is all in readiness?"

"Aye, and waiting for you—follow me," and passing through his room, with its humble bed and comfortless appearance, we reached the head of a narrow staircase.

"The way is rather dark, my son, cling to the balustrade as you descend. I had the battery and all the apparatus that you may need, placed in the basement, for it is more retired and secluded than the lecture-room, and we will not be annoyed with inquisitive students."

"You are *very* kind, indeed," (I did not know whether to call him "Father" or not, but I must call him by some name in speaking to him; I finally overcame my Protestant antipathies and uttered the word.) "I fear I have caused you a great deal of trouble, Father Clement?"

"None at all—do not mention it, my son."

We reached the foot of the staircase, and the priest halted at a low, gloomy-looking door, and turning the bolt, entered it. I followed him into the dimly-lighted room, which was paved with brick, and lighted by two windows, placed above our reach, and covered with dust and cobwebs. The walls were mouldy and covered with mildew, and as he opened the door a blast of air, rendered disagreeably offensive by its long confinement, blew in our faces.

"It is rather dark here for an experiment, Father Clement—if you will wait a moment I'll go out and purchase candles."

"I will get lights, my son; it is darker than I had supposed. Remain here until I return."

He left me, and I could hear him groping timidly up the dim staircase, and then the echo of his footsteps died away, and all was silent. The time that he was absent seemed an age to me, and I began to recall to memory all the terrible tales I had heard of Romish priests—of their hatred of Protestants, and their treachery—their heartless cruelties, as related in the chronicles of Fox's Book of Martyrs, etc., etc. The unusual length of time which had elapsed, at length wakened my suspicions, and rousing myself to a height of indignation and anger by what I supposed a trick played upon me, I had started hastily to the doorway, when the sound of footsteps reached my ears, and presently the affable priest came slowly down the stairs, and entered the room again.

"You were becoming impatient at my long delay, my son?"

"I was only wondering what detained you, Father. The time doubtless appeared longer to me than it really was."

"I could not, at first, find a candle, and had to rummage about for it. I will now place it upon the table here, and you will find the battery all charged and ready for your experiment. Can I be of any assistance to you?" And he smiled benignantly, and looked tenderly into my eyes.

"Have you not other engagements?" asked I with a slight hesitation.

"Not particularly pressing ones. Command my services if I can in any way aid you."

"You may assist me greatly, for I do not know much about operating with the battery; and if you——"

I faltered and became slightly embarrassed as I acknowledged my ignorance.

"Will explain the mode of experimenting with it, do you mean to say? With the greatest pleasure, my son."

Greatly relieved, I bowed gratefully as he drew near the table upon which the mysterious agent was placed which was to galvanize into life my torpid theories and vivify my dreams.

"Where is the substance you wish to decompose?" inquired the priest.

I drew from my side pocket a small glass vial, carefully rolled in three or four folds of paper, and showed it to him.

"Ah, a liquid, is it?"

"Yes, Father, a combination of liquids and solids."

"And, pray, what are the substances?" asked he, extending his hand for the vial, and examining its contents by the light as he shook them together.

"Ah, that is a secret! Excuse me, Father Clement, it is very rude of me, but I cannot tell you."

"Not so, my son. You may have your own good reasons for not informing me. It was impertinent of me to ask you, as there may be some important secret involved which you do not wish every one to know."

"Yes, there may be," said I, smiling.

"If you will give me that small glass saucer behind you——ah, thank you.—I will now pour the contents of your vial out into it," and he emptied the vial. "How it sparkles! There surely is some metallic substance in the mixture."

Watching him intently, I forgot to answer.

"I will now place the saucer—which you see, my son, is quite heavy—upon this small block on the table, so as to elevate it, and then fill the cells and cups of the battery."

I brought the acid to him, which was in a large glass pitcher, and he poured it carefully into the cups. In a few minutes the battery was in working order, and, arranging the wires, he dipped the point of one of them into the liquid in the saucer, bidding me take hold of the other one and do likewise. Then taking them himself, one in each hand, he slowly approached the points—tipped with platina—towards each other. Small, but intensely brilliant, sparks of light passed rapidly through the liquid, from the positive to the negative pole, and suddenly, as we leaned breathlessly forward, a slight explosion, like the bursting of a cracker, took place. Re-

coiling in alarm, I looked up as a thick cloud of snowy vapor floated slowly to the ceiling; then casting my eyes toward the saucer, I perceived that the liquid was in flames. We watched the progress of the experiment closely, and neither I nor my companion spoke. He appeared almost as much surprised as myself, although doubtless familiar with similar experiments. The flame seemed almost ready to expire, and yet the volume of the liquid was not perceptibly diminished. We again approached our faces nearer, in order to see more distinctly, and Father Clement settled his black silk skull-cap cautiously upon his head. Just as we were bending over, another explosion took place, precipitating the clouds of vapor into our faces. I sneezed violently, and gasped for breath; my companion pressed his temple with an expression of pain, and coughed several times. The snowy vapor again floated slowly to the ceiling, and the flame upon the surface of the liquid became of a beautiful violet color, and then rapidly shaded into blue.

These explosions and generations of vapor continued to succeed each other in quick succession, and the liquid was now very sensibly diminishing. I watched the poles of the battery in trembling, nervous excitement. A white substance, scarcely distinguishable, began to collect slowly upon one of them—it grew gradually, and glittered with intense brightness. Observing it, I gazed eagerly, fixedly, and uttered an exclamation of joyful astonishment. My hopes, which had well nigh become extinguished, as I saw the liquid consuming before me, now burned higher than ever. Success was certain—my eyes could not deceive me, there was a diamond slowly forming upon the pole of the battery!

"What is it you see, my son?" asked the aged priest, "I can discover nothing."

"The compound is decomposing, Father, and one of the parts is settling upon the pole."

"Ah," exclaimed he, gazing scrutinizingly, "I have not my glasses, but I think I perceive a small, white substance—is that it?"

"Yes, sir."

The liquid had all disappeared—the blue flames expired, and the white, vapory clouds slowly drifted out of the room. A strong smell of brimstone caused us to sneeze and cough violently.

"One would suppose that we had had a visit from his Satanic Majesty, from the odor which permeates the atmosphere," observed Father Clement, laughing and coughing by turns, as he raised himself upon tiptoe and threw open one of the windows.

Detaching the hard, white substance with trembling eagerness, from the pole of the battery, I enveloped it in a small piece of brown paper.

"Father Clement, I am exceedingly obliged to you, and will return some time to-day and remunerate you for the trouble I have given."

"It is nothing, my young friend, I can accept no remuneration for the slight assistance I have been enabled to render. *You* seem satisfied with the result of the experiment, and I am content. May your discovery, if you have made one, be a blessing to the world, and may God give you life to perfect it."

I grasped him warmly by the hand, murmuring my gratitude and my adieux, and hurriedly left the place. I rushed along the crowded streets, elbowing persons aside, and dashing against all the obstructions to be met with, as I clenched my fingers to hold my priceless treasure.

"Hallo! there," shouted an omnibus driver, reining back his horses as I dashed heedlessly across the street. Opening my eyes I sprung back, as the lumbering vehicle rolled rapidly past.

"What hum-drum creatures these merchants are, with their dray-loads of boxes and bales of goods—how fast they imagine they are making money, as they ship their heaps of merchandise to their country customers, and chuckle and rub their hands triumphantly over the fat profits. Of all the hundreds of persons that I pass upon the pavements, how many walk home with buoyant, elastic tread, if, during the day, they have made fifty or sixty dollars, congratulating themselves upon their wonderful success in life. But

among the thousands in the city, not one—no, not *one*, possesses such a marvellous secret as *I*, an humble pedestrian. Ha! ha! ha! why, I could, in an hour, buy you out and hire you as my coachman, you sleek-faced profundity of turtle-soup, rolling so pompously along in that splendid equipage. And dare you cast your supercilious smile upon me, as I wait at the crossing until your carriage passes?—ah! if you only knew what I hold in this little bit of brown paper in my hand, you would be out, bowing obsequiously, and begging me to honor you by riding at your side.—You would present me to your only daughter, who is to be your heiress, and if I but named it—force her vulgar, fat hand into mine—for money, money is your only god, and *I* am the embodiment, the incarnation of your deity.

"Ha! let me hold thee tighter, my little Genius, what countless thousands are not concealed in thy compressed bulk! and then the source whence you were acquired is ceaselessly inexhaustible. A touch of a magic wire—a cloud of vapor—a strong, hellish smell of brimstone—a blue flame, and lo! like the Genii of Aladdin's lamp, thou art before me! I must purchase a galvanic battery of my own, and it must be of immense power, for I shall make experiments in secret, and by increasing the quantity of the compound, what large, inestimably valuable gems may I not hope to produce! The thought fevers my brain! *I*, who but yesterday kenneled in an humble boarding-house at four dollars a week, and thought that price too extravagant for my contracting purse, may now ride to the most sumptuously appointed hotel, and strew my way with dollars. What feastings of luxury—what banquettings of love—what glory—what fame—what honor shall I enjoy among men, for all men worship gold, remove but a single letter and it is to them—a god; all men bow the knee and worship it, and I can command it to my feet.

"Aspenwold, the home of my childhood, shall be again purchased, and my noble mother shall roll through its gravelled pathways, and alight from her carriage at its doors. We will then make the

tour of Europe, and Cora shall accompany us; we will winter in Florence, Naples, or perhaps, in Rome, and summer amidst the Highlands of bonnie Scotland. Oh, such glorious times as we shall have—my mother, my sisters, Cora and I. Ha! ha! and all this joy shall, like a mighty, far spreading oak, grow up from this little diamond acorn which I hold so tightly in my hand. Brave little acorn! powerful little acorn! do not escape me—do not slip from my grasp—but even if you do, can I not by the electric magic of those wires, duplicate you a hundred times, and gather you up in handfulls?"

But in my excitement, and absorbed extatic dreaming, I had passed several squares beyond my now despised boarding house. What is the use of going back—pursue your course to the hotel, engage an elegant suite of apartments, order your dinner, and then, stepping into a carriage, call at your lodging house, and stupify the sharp-nosed landlady, by paying off your bill from the carriage window, and ordering your trunk to be brought down from that "airy little apartment in the fourth story, commanding such a fine view of the city."

This would be rather too lordly, and I finally concluded to return, pack my trunk, and then calling a hackman, drive to the hotel. So I entered the door, and again tremblingly clutching the little brown paper, sprang up the long stair-case—three or four steps at a leap—reached the entrance of my own room—threw open the door, and panting for breath, locked it, and dropping the curtain to exclude any one that might by accident be watching me, laid the paper carefully upon the table.

Throwing off my hat, I wiped my forehead—for although the day was cold I was perspiring freely—and walking the room slowly, to regain my breath, at length seated myself by the table, and feasted my eyes upon the small bit of crushed brown paper.

I touched it and raised it to my lips, my frame shook with an emotion of overpowering, exultant joy. I trembled to unfold the paper, and replaced it upon the table, then gazing yearningly, I

grasped it again, and tore it open. The diminutive treasure fell upon the floor at my feet. Kneeling, I picked it up and placed it upon the table—it was nearly as large as a common sized pea. Drawing my chair slowly up, I looked intently, worshipingly upon it—I was fascinated, and could not remove my eyes.

I watched the new-born gem in breathless, motionless eagerness. A strange change seemed coming over it. Rubbing my eyes violently, I looked again—it was becoming gradually less—it was slowly evaporating, and losing itself in the surrounding atmosphere. O, madness! I stretched forth my hand—I touched it—and crumbling slowly beneath my fingers, it vanished, and was gone!

CHAPTER XLIX.

"CAN you tell me where the office of Gunter's Magazine is?" asked I, accosting a genteel looking man whom I encountered upon the pavement in front of the Custom-house, in sauntering down Chestnut-street, Philadelphia.

"Don't know exactly, sir—think it's two or three squares below."

"Thank you." And walking down the street, I at length succeeded in finding the place.

"Can I see the editor of the magazine?" inquired I of the clerk in the lower office.

"Perhaps you wish to see the publisher, sir—do you want to subscribe for the magazine?"

"No, I wish to speak to the editor upon editorial business—where can I find him?"

"Up in the third story, sir—here, just go up this stair, and the last door at the end of the passage in the third floor, is his. You'll know it by seeing a newspaper pinned over the transom."

Following the clerk's directions, I mounted the stairway, passed along the dirty corridor, strewed with bits of paper and pieces of letters, and knocked at the door.

"Come in," said a voice with a languid laziness of tone. Opening the door, I entered.

"How are you, sir?" said a fat, pleasant looking man, with small twinkling black eyes, and self-satisfied look, with his feet elevated upon his writing desk—chair tipped back in a luxurious attitude, and a segar smoking at his lips.

"Mr. Gunter, I presume?"

"That is my name, sir—won't you take a seat?"

"I have a letter for you, sir, from Mr. Edgar Trevor, of Kentucky, relative to a story which you accepted for the magazine several months ago," and I extended it and took a seat nearly opposite the gentleman, who now reluctantly removed his legs and placed them upon the floor.

"Ah! from Mr. Trevor, of Kentucky, did you say?—don't remember the name."

"Perhaps, when you have read the letter, you may," replied I, coolly taking up a newspaper near me, and glancing carelessly over it, as the gentleman slowly broke the seal of the envelope—gave a parting, affectionate puff to his segar, and laid it gingerly upon the table. Looking over the newspaper, I watched him attentively as he read.

"So, you are Mr. Devereux, the friend of Mr. Trevor—very glad to make your acquaintance—extremely happy to see you, sir."

We arose, bowed simultaneously, and shook hands with each other.

"When did you leave Kentucky, Mr. Devereux?—glorious State that."

"Several weeks since—I have been spending the winter in Washington City, and expecting to pass through Philadelphia, I provided myself with a letter of introduction from Mr. Trevor, so as to be able to call upon you, and learn why you had not yet published the story."

"Well—a—Mr. Devereux, we have been so crowded with manuscript, and so busy in getting out the next month's number, that a—" he stopped.

"What? Mr. Gunter."

"That I actually had forgotten all about it, sir—I, am really very sorry, indeed—we will try and push it for you next month. By-the-bye, I have marked several passages in it, which I had intended writing to you or Mr Trevor about, as they will have to be altered, and some parts entirely omitted, in order to suit the character of our magazine."

"What portions are they, sir?—let me see, if you please."

"With pleasure, sir," answered the gentleman, replacing his almost extinct segar in his mouth, and sucking it vigorously. Succeeding in relighting the smouldering fire, he drew out the drawer of the table near him, and commenced rummaging industriously among a confused mass of MS. and scraps of clipped newspapers.

"Stephen, where in the deuce is that manuscript of Mr. Devereux's?—entitled 'A Legend of the Mammoth Cave.' Don't you know—I had it making some alterations in it, a day or two since?"

Stephen, a tall, lank young man, with a pen behind his ear, fingers bedaubed with ink, and dressed in a green-worsted pea-jacket, came forward from the corner, where he appeared to be busily engaged in directing the covers of the magazine papers, and wished to know what was wanted. Mr. Gunter repeated his request in rather a higher-pitched tone, as Stephen seemed to be somewhat deaf.

"Don't you know where I put it?"

Stephen, strangely enough, "couldn't possibly imagine—believed he did remember the title of the story—wasn't exactly sure of it, and even if he did—couldn't, for the life of him, think where Mr. Gunter placed it."

"Very singular—very—by Jupiter."

Mr. Gunter puffed at his expiring segar with renewed vigor, and again rummaged in the drawer.

'Well, I'll look for it again to-morrow, Mr. Devereux. It shall be found—it shall be found, sir, and then I can show you the alterations that I wish you to make. You'll be in the city for several days, I presume?"

"Perhaps I may."

"You see, Mr. Devereux, we pride ourselves upon editing and publishing the first of American Monthlies, for our magazine is, emphatically, American. Some of our rivals in New York, now, for instance—no names given, you know, but of course you understand—make up their magazine by clippings and rehashings from

the English periodicals, and it pays, too, for, only see what a subscription list they have—pays well, for, as there is no international copyright-law, they do not have to give the authors anything for their productions. We, upon the contrary, pay for all our articles at the rate of four dollars a printed page; and one reason why I have not been able to publish your story sooner, is this:—You see, we have engaged Mr. J. T. Budley to furnish us with some war sketches, for he describes a battle with the gusto of a butcher, and these things are always popular with the commonality of readers. Budley knows he is to get four dollars a page and the darned fellow, if he does preach sometimes, knows which side his bread is buttered on, and, of course, spins the bloody things out to as great a length as possible. In this way he crowds other contributors out, and, so you see, your sketch is among the number."

"Yes, sir," observed I, "I will call again, then, to-morrow."

"If you please, Mr. Devereux, I'll have the manuscript hunted up by that time, and we can then make the necessary omissions. They will not injure the story at all, but in my opinion, greatly improve it. I flatter myself you will agree with me in this particular, sir, and hope there will be no hard feeling."

"I hope not," said I, opening the door. "Good morning, sir."

I called at the office punctually the next day, and found the editor out. Stephen informed me, however, that he had just gone across the street to get a segar, and that if I would take a seat he would be in again in a moment. Concluding that it would be better to await his return than to climb three flights of stairs again, I took up a copy of "Blackwood" lying upon the table, and commenced reading. Presently Mr. Gunter entered.

"Good morning, Mr. Devereux; have a segar?"

"Thank you; I never smoke."

"Never smoke! what a luxury, then, you are ignorant of. If I did not get a smoke after breakfast, dinner, and supper, I really don't know what I should do. When I used to be a carpenter ——"

I stared in surprise.

"Yes, when I used to be a carpenter, Mr. Devereux—for these

hands have pushed the plane, and curled up the shavings many a day—smoking was one of the greatest consolations I had. Some persons here among the codfish aristocracy don't like the idea of associating with mechanics, but whenever they commence 'gassing' about birth and descent, and all that sort of thing, I just tap them on the shoulder slily, 'Come, old boy, when I used to be a carpenter, working at the bench, I have passed your grandfather's blacksmith shop, and seen him shoeing horses many a day as I went to dinner.' It does not matter a continental copper with me what a man *has* been—*I* look at what he *is*. Now you—Mr. Trevor tells me in his letter—are a son of Sir Walter Scott; but then you——"

"I did not come here to talk of such things, sir," interrupted I, coolly, "but to see if you had found the manuscript."

"Sure enough! pray, excuse me—I had entirely forgotten it again. You see when I once get a segar in my mouth all my cares and troubles are forgotten. I discovered it in the very bottom of the drawer; here it is."

Stretching out my hand, I received it from him. Pencil marks were upon every page almost, and I could with difficulty repress my rage as I observed some, of what I had considered the most "taking" passages enclosed in penciled brackets.

"If you wish all these marked portions omitted, I can plainly inform you, sir, that I shall not agree to it. I would rather take the story back and give you another in the place of it, for I have one or two others in my trunk."

"Have you?" observed Mr. Gunter, with provoking *sang froid*, puffing at his segar. "If you would only do that, Mr. Devereux, it would oblige me exceedingly; for to arrange this manuscript as it should be, you would be under the necessity of re-writing it entirely, and that you would not, perhaps, like to do."

"No, sir, I would not. Why did you accept it if there were so many faults about it? I have your note to Mr. Trevor in my possession, in which you say 'we accept the story with pleasure, and will publish it shortly.'"

"Very true, Mr. Devereux; but I read it hurriedly, and then the name at the head of the page—'by a son of the late Sir Walter Scott'—this, you see, rather dazzled me."

"But, Mr. Gunter, I cannot make the corrections that you desire, for I have not the necessary time."

"Give me one of your other stories in the place of this, then, and you will not need to deface it. You see you are a young writer yet, Mr. Devereux, and have your reputation to make. Would it not be best for you, if you intend to depend upon literature for a support, to 'put the best foot foremost,' and publish the best you have?"

Pausing a moment, he seemed to await an answer. I was annoyed and irritated, and did not speak, but busied myself in rolling up the manuscript, crushing it angrily in my fingers.

"Now you have written something better than this—at least, something more suited to the tone and character of our magazine, have you not?"

"I have a sketch which I think would please you better, but then it is not so long as this, and as you measure and pay for such articles as the shopmen do for calico and tape, it would not amount to as much; and money at the present time is more of an object to me than literary reputation."

"Very unfortunate for you, indeed, Mr. Devereux! Pity you didn't think of it, and spin it out a little longer."

"I did not then know that you paid a premium for quantity, but thought the articles were valued for their quality, and that alone."

"You have never edited a magazine yet, Mr. Devereux, and consequently are not posted—Stephen, give me a match, will you? my segar has gone out."

"Well, I will call in the afternoon, leave the other story with you, and learn what you think of it."

"Do so, Mr. Devereux—and will you take this manuscript? I fancy Hoode may buy it—it will suit him better than it does us."

CHAPTER L.

In the afternoon I called and left another story with Mr. Gunter, which he hastily looked through, read a few pages of, and then pronounced excellent.

"This will do, Mr. Devereux, I will publish it with pleasure."

Waiting a few moments to see whether he would offer me a cheque for the money which the article amounted to, and seeing that he did not mention it, I inquired—"When would it be convenient for you to pay me for the manuscript?"

"As soon as it is published, Mr. Devereux—we make it a practice never to pay our contributors until the magazine is published, so that you may expect your pay in two or three weeks at the furthest."

"But I may not wish to remain in the city so long."

"Sorry for it—can send the money to your address, if you wish."

Disappointed again in not receiving the money for the MS., and doubting if I ever should, I left the room, muttering anathemas against all magazine editors, and Gunter in particular. If I was an author of established reputation he would not dare to treat me in this manner—but patience, the time may come, when I shall be revenged for all these things. Having the rejected MS. still in my possession, as well as several others, which had not yet been offered for publication, I walked hurriedly along Chestnut street, and soon arrived at the office of another "exclusively American Monthly," edited by a Mr. Hood, in conjunction with a lady of some local literary reputation.

"Here is a manuscript tale which a friend of mine requested me to leave for your inspection, sir; should you be pleased with it, he

would like to have it published as soon as possible; should you decline, I will call in a few days and return it to the author."

"Yes, sir," replied Mr. Hood, arranging his spectacles, and peering inquiringly at the title of the story.

"We are very much crowded with matter at present, sir, and as our magazine is edited by a lady, and read almost exclusively by females, we usually aim to select such stories as will be most suited to the taste and comprehensions of our countrywomen. From my long experience as the editor of a lady's magazine, I am impressed with the belief, sir, that they require something weaker and more diluted than the masculine gender, and that stories written by the stronger sex are not always adapted to the limited capacities of women."

"You are very complimentary, indeed, sir."

"I speak from long experience, Mr. ——, I forget your name, sir—ah, Devereux—from long experience, Mr. Devereux. I will, however, look over the manuscript, and should the editress be pleased with it, will be happy to purchase it of you. Will it be convenient for you to call on Saturday?—this is Wednesday, I believe—I can then give you an answer."

"Very well, sir. Mr. Gunter, of Gunter's Magazine, has accepted a sketch of my friend's, and is to publish it next month. It would be quite a gratification to him, I dare say, to have them both appear at the same time."

"And so your friend is a contributor to Gunter?—we conduct our editorial business in such an entirely different manner, that it is very rare for us to be suited by one contributor, for what pleases him does not agree with our literary stomach at all."

"Ah, is it possible," said I. "Good morning, Mr. Hood, I'll call again, on Saturday."

"Good morning, Mr. Devereux."

Leaving Mr. Hood, I went to several other offices of weekly literary journals and periodicals, and left the remaining sketches with those of the highest character and widest circulation, presuming

that, if they accepted them, that they would most probably pay the best price. Then, besides this, I wished to make my first appearance in as good company as possible. Several editors almost declined to receive contributions from an unknown writer, and informed me that they had a regular corps of contributors already engaged, and did not wish to crowd their productions out, by accepting those of one without a name.

By this time I had disposed of all my sketches and tales, and had been requested by the editors with whom I had left them, to call on Saturday, and they would then be able to inform me whether or not they were accepted.

Returning to my boarding house, which was on Spruce street, I passed through Washington square, a shaded enclosure of five or six acres, sometimes dignified by the citizens by the title of "park," and seated myself upon one of the queer looking little stools scattered about the grounds. I commenced musing upon the prospect of becoming a literary celebrity, as I sat and inhaled the cool pleasant air, for it was now early spring, and the day had been sunshiny and unusually warm for the season. The grass in the square was springing up with a fresh greenness of appearance, pleasant to eyes weary of endless rows of brick and mortar. Early birds hopped chirpingly about, like first arrivals at a fashionable watering place, seemingly astonished at their own solitary loneliness, and nature—at least, this little bit of it—whispered of hope in the low, soft language which only her worshipers understand. The heaviness which overshadowed my soul, floated away like murky clouds, and the hopes and desires, that like the stars of the morning, fade, but do not disappear, again came shining serenely upon the calmness of my life.

After so many disappointments within the few past months, was it right for me to indulge in the vain, deluding dreams—I will cease to wish for success, and then, perchance, it may come to me. But who ever yet desisted from hoping and dreaming of the future—the man without hope is a perambulating paradox. And so I

cleared away the ruins of my former castle in the air, and commenced to rebuild others, equally as foundationless.

Tame squirrels, delightful reminders of the country home I had left in such disgust, leaped gracefully about from tree to tree, and sitting all alone, I looked out to the street swaying and pulsing with life, and rushing ever on, while I lay like a poor dreamer upon the shore. Every one is occupied in pursuing some object, but me, and I alone do nothing but waste my time in idle dreams of an unreal life, which never will—never can exist. Why, O why was I placed in a world without money, when money purchases all things—love, happiness, boundless enjoyment,—until death taps us upon the shoulder like an inflexible jailor, and hurries us off to eternal limbo. Even then, money buys handkerchiefs full of tears—a eulogistic sermon—a splendid coffin, and a marble obelisk. How exquisitely I am organized to appreciate and worship the Beautiful in art and nature, and how I recoil from all that is low, degrading and disgusting. Life's asperities should have been softened down, or I hardened for the contact with them. I cannot battle with the world, for I both fear and hate it. The shell of the nautilus is buoyantly adapted to the storms and dashings of the tossing sea, but I am without a shell, and O, my God! I shall sink amid the waters "Peace, peace, thou impious soul contending with thy Maker. See you not that He walks upon these tumultuous waves, and bids your faith come forth and meet him. Courage! and look above, lest that thou sink, like Peter.

The clock in the neighboring tower of the old State House struck with brazen clangor the hour of six. Starting hurriedly, I left the square, and walked to my lodgings."

The hope of some, if not all, of my stories being accepted, served to buoy me up until Saturday, and I strolled about the city, lounged in the public reading-rooms and libraries, and read until fatigued, and then I stepped into the omnibus and rode out to Fairmount and Laurel Hill, and idled a day away between the city of the dead and the pleasure haunt of the living.

Saturday came. Rising early in the morning, I went out to take a walk in the square, and after breakfast went to the Post-office, for I had received no letters from home for several weeks. To tell the truth about the matter, I had not written but once to my mother and twice to Cora since leaving Washington City. What could I write? My pride would not let me acknowledge all my disappointments; and then I did not wish to cause them anxiety and sorrow at home. Better, thought I, to wait until success should crown my efforts, and then write.

"Any letters for me?" said I to the clerk, extending to him my card so that he could not misunderstand the name.

Shuffling over the large greasy bundle, he singled out two. Receiving them joyfully, I went off to read them, for after so long a silence, they were doubly welcome. Both were post-marked Millville, and the hand-writing was familiar, for one was from Cora, the other from my mother. Cora complained of my long silence, in the wild, eloquent language of love and taunted me with forgetfulness—poured out all the wealth of her ardent young heart, and besought me piteously to write and tell her all.

"Had I met another fairer and more accomplished? had I forgotten the first love of my youth, and laughed at the impetuous outbursts of my young, panting heart? had I lost my purity of soul amidst the world, and rudely cast aside the clinging tendrils of her love? If so, tell me, oh, tell me, Edgar," she concluded, "and I will trouble you no more. But, ah! this doubt, this dread, this silence—I cannot, cannot bear it! Better to know that I am no longer loved than to endure this anxiety!"

"I will, I will, my Cora!" murmured I passionately, "for to-day shall decide my fate. If my articles are accepted, it will convince me that I am worth something, at any rate, and that my pen can give me a support, and may also give me fame. And how delightful to be able to write to Cora of my triumphs, and to be read of, to be talked about, and to be famous! Would she not be proud of me? Would she not love me still more?—for the crowned ones

of Fame are ever the beloved of women—particularly when they are young and handsome."

I opened my mother's letter.

"Why have you not written to us—to *me*—my Edgar? How long, how very long, it seems since we last heard from you! Each evening have I watched at the gate until I heard the mail-coach rattling over the hill, and then sent Felix in haste to see if there was yet a letter. Each day I wait wearily, and still, still no tidings from my Edgar! My heart grows sick, and I must myself break the silence. Are you unwell, my boy, among strangers? and do you fear to alarm me by writing? or if not ill, are you depressed by disappointment? Tell me, tell me all, for *I* also have felt the pangs of those 'who have seen their fondest hopes decay,' and can sympathize with you. Fear no upbraidings from me. You have done well, done nobly, since leaving home: but God, for wise and inscrutable purposes, often thwarts our most cherished schemes, and disappoints our fondest wishes. May it not be thus with you, Edgar! Give me your confidence as of old, when you knelt at my knee and clasped your little hands, while the blossom-laden air of June wafted your whisperings to the gates of heaven.

"You were doubtless right in not wishing to remain longer a burden upon the kindness of Mr. Eldon, after your ill success in applying for a place. May he have his reward for the attention and fatherly tenderness with which he treated you.

"Inform me what you intend doing in Philadelphia, and if you had any letters of introduction from Mr. Eldon. It is a sad thing to be in a large, heartless city, without friends. I trust you have them. Do you need any money, my dear boy? Be not afraid to write to me if you do, for I well know that my Edgar will not spend it foolishly. I have an old diamond bracelet, a gift from my grandfather, which I never wear, and I could easily send it to the city and sell it for quite a large sum. Let me know, my dear boy, all your wants and wishes, that I may assist you.

"By-the-way, I had almost forgotten in my yearning earnestness

to tell you that Helen, who, you will remember, has been at Louisville upon a short visit, as I informed you in my last letter, had returned home with an enslaved suitor following at her chariot wheels. To speak plainly, and sensibly, some gentleman who met her in society, has been so much attracted as to accompany her home. I cannot say that he is young—but then, he isn't *very* old—not yet past fifty. A quiet, genteel, and rather good looking person—very precise, and decidedly old-bachelorish. How would you like him for a brother-in-law, Eddie dear? He has not formally proposed yet, but I anticipate it in a very short time, as he has been to the village several times since Helen's return. They correspond also, and Helen has shown me one or two of his epistles. I should not tell *you* about them, for fear of offending Helen—but they are such queer specimens of business-style love letters, that I know you would laugh outright, in reading them. It was with difficulty that I kept my countenance straight, I assure you. He undoubtedly loves Helen, and is a highly respectable gentleman, and report says, quite wealthy. His heart has lain so long dormant, that like a bear which has slept all through the winter, it is somewhat awkward in its movements, when first aroused by the love breezes of an awakening spring. I dare say it will become more graceful after a while, and I think with a few more attempts, he will be able to write quite a model epistle—if he doesn't he will *act* it out, and that you know is better. But enough of this—perhaps when you read it, my words may seem cold and indifferent, for I grieve sadly at your silence, and wonder amid all the cares and duties of the household—wonder ever and anon if Edgar, my only Edgar, is well and happy. Helen, Bel and Fanny send their kisses—do you not feel them warm upon the paper? And I also salute and remember you in my prayers. Adieu—may heaven bless you.

"MADELAINE TREVOR.

"*Millville, Saturday Evening.*"

CHAPTER LI.

It was now sufficiently late in the day to call upon the editors. Passing through Washington Square, I crossed to the grounds in front of the State House, and keeping straight up the pathway, entered the hall, to examine the register which is kept there. I also wished to compose myself, as I was somewhat excited with the near approach of an interview which was about to decide my literary fortunes, and perhaps influence my whole after life. Sinking upon one of the sofas placed near the large windows, looking out upon Chestnut street, I gazed absently upon the throng of gaily dressed ladies, busy men, and elegant loungers, flowing forever past.

"If I should die this moment, none would regret me, or even know my loss. To die and to be forgotten is indeed miserable. There upon the wall is the full length portrait of Lafayette, opposite to him, that of William Penn, then Henry Clay's portrait, draped in crape—for a nation's tears were not yet dry at his loss—all, all are immortal in two worlds, and when they died, they left their deeds behind them."

Ten! eleven! twelve o'clock! strikes the bell.

"Good heavens! how late it is—one glance at the register and I must be away." Approaching it I looked with a careless indifference from the last freshly written name of a John Smith, a John Jones, or some other indefinite appellation of an individual, and ran my eye listlessly up the column. I did not have much expectation of meeting with any name familiar to me, and could scarcely account for the curiosity which impelled me to look. Suddenly my eye brightened, my pulse beat faster, and bending earnestly over

the book, I read the names of the "Honorable Augustus Derby and Mrs. Evaleen Derby." The date was Saturday, and they were now in the city. What joy, what rapture, to see one so dear after such long weeks of separation and solitude amid indifferent strangers. Her husband, then, was with her. But *he* could not know anything—assuredly not—the Eldons were people of tact and discretion.

" Do you remember how long it has been since these visitors were in ?" asked I of the usher, as I pointed out the names.

" Can't say, sir, as I didn't notice them register. So many people are always passing in and out, that I don't pay much attention to them "

" Excuse me ; I should not expect you to remember the faces of strangers, but this lady—Mrs. Derby—is young and very beautiful."

" There was a very handsome woman here about half an hour ago with a rather oldish looking gentleman—I noticed that much —and I think she had sweet-looking blue eyes and—and brownish, gold-colored hair."

" Thank you, thank you. How long did you say it had been since they were here ?"

" Well—about half an hour I guess—not longer than that I know."

I ran out of the apartment, and walked rapidly up Chestnut street towards the Girard House, for I had once heard Mrs. Derby speak of stopping at that hotel when she was in the city. Entering, I hastily turned to the register of arrivals, and looked for her name. It was not there. " Very strange," muttered I,— " she must certainly be at the La Pierre House, as that is the newest, and probably, for the time being, most fashionable hotel.— But it was quite a long distance off—six or eight squares, perhaps —and certainly too far to walk, for I was out of breath now. What if it were miles ! remember who you search for ! Regaining the street, I chanced to see an omnibus passing, and this would take me to within half a square of the place. Entering it, I soon reach-

ed my destination. The register was again anxiously, tremblingly inspected, and there, there were the names!

"Are Governor and Mrs. Derby in their rooms at present, sir?"

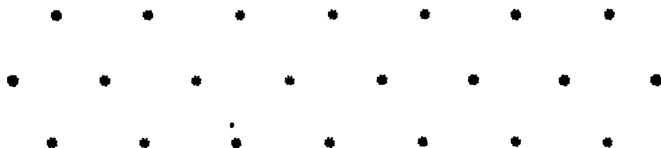
"Governor and Mrs. Derby?" repeated the clerk, turning to the book, and running the point of his finger up the page. "No, sir, not here—left about half an hour ago for New York." He turned carelessly away, and resumed the reading of a newspaper.

I sat down, maddened with vexation and disappointment. Only one half hour had separated us—she had been here—she had walked down those very steps with her tiny feet, and the perfumed breath from her lips still lingered, perchance, and permeated the atmosphere,—and I in the same city, and yet ignorant of her presence until, alas! it was too late. I wondered and longed to know if she yet remembered me, or had the love been but momentary, and forgotten like a ball-room flirtation.

Retracing my steps sadly down Chestnut street, I determined to call upon Mr. Hood and learn the fate of my manuscript. Perhaps doomed to another disappointment! What difference did it make to me?—better to know the worst, and strive to forget, than be ever hoping and expecting. Ascending the stairs which led to the office, my mind a prey to the most opposing emotions, and my knees trembling under me from weakness and excessive mental irritation, I laid my hand upon the door, and forcing a calmness which I was far from feeling, I sternly turned the knob and entered.

"Did you find time to examine the manuscript I left with you, Mr. Hood?" asked I, as that gentleman came forward with his spectacles in his hand, and looking very self-important under the burden of managing the whole business of the "only exclusively Lady's monthly in the country."

"Yes, sir, I sent it to Mrs. Indigoe—let me see, I always forget your name, sir, ah, yes, Devereux—I sent it to her, Mr. Devereux, and she returned the manuscript this morning, sir—says it won't suit—altogether too masculine in style and matter for the tastes of our readers. I am very sorry indeed, sir, as I would be extremely happy to purchase it of you, but then ——"



FINDING that literature. from my little experience of it—to use a slang mercantile phrase, "wouldn't pay," I began to ponder and think of what else there was I could engage in. It were foolish in this age, to sit down and grieve over disappointed hopes. Something else must be tried, for life must be endured, and nobly lived out, if it could not be enjoyed. Misfortunes would not always befall me, and, even if I were one of the doomed ones, given over like Job, to the experimental influences of the devil, it was far more heroic to endure all and live, than to fly to the relief of the suicide, and like a craven coward, sever the ties of life. But what to do? that was the question.

And I could not answer it.

I wrote to my mother, and candidly, truthfully told her all that had happened to me since leaving Washington. I had even commenced to describe to her the adventure with Mrs. Derby, in the library, but the ink seemed to dry up in my pen, and a sad, sweet countenance and pitying blue eyes, wet with tears, came between me and the paper—the air seemed trying to extinguish the flame of the candle—I erased what had been written, and the "dead past was shrouded darkly in forgetfulness." There are some secrets which cannot be told even to a mother.

I wrote to Cora, also, and in all the breathing, burning language of my love, rendered more intense by absence and sorrow, and loneliness, poured out my pent-up emotional wildness, until the very words seemed to linger and come to me reluctantly, as though they could not bear all the heaped-up passion which I wished to press upon them to convey to her.

The next day was Sunday, and I went to church for the first time in several weeks, for I had been too much occupied of late, with the vanities of the world, and the glory thereof, to think much of another state of existence. The holy atmosphere of the place acted as balm to my wounded spirit, and I who had murmured at the Providence of God, was awed down to my knees as the grand thunder tones of the organ swept over me, and reverberated through the prayerful stillness, and the exulting anthems of the singers in the lofty gallery, sounded sweet and solemn as the music of seraphs.

When Monday arrived, I awoke from a placid sleep—'a deep dream of peace,' and settled within my mind what next I could do.

My father, during his life, or at least that portion of it in which he was engaged in the mercantile business, had always purchased his goods in Philadelphia. Consequently I was well acquainted with the names and position of a great many of the wholesale merchants in the city, and as I could think of nothing else, I finally came to the conclusion that it would be the best thing I could do to call upon these gentlemen, introduce myself, and request them to assist me in getting a situation as clerk or salesman. It was impossible for me to remain in the city much longer without engaging in something whereby my purse might be replenished. Calling upon several of these merchants, I introduced myself, and was strangely surprised at the knowledge they exhibited of my father, his business connections, credit, &c.

Disclosing to them the object of my visit, I was listened to courteously and politely, but as they had at first supposed that I came for the purpose of buying more goods—as soon as they discovered their mistake I thought, (though it might have been a fancy,) that the sincere pleasure which they expressed at seeing me, was somewhat abated. Business was very dull just at that time, they said, and as they had as many salesmen already engaged as their business would justify, they could not offer me a place. They would, however, make some inquiries, and see if some of their friends

would employ me. So I was taken and introduced to numerous persons in the dry goods business, some of whom expressed a wish to engage additional assistance, and thought that probably I might suit them. Then I was questioned about my qualities, as I had seen negroes catechised in Kentucky, by slave traders. "Was I well acquainted with the business—how long had I followed it? Could I give good city recommendations as to character, qualifications and habits? What was my age?—was I married?—had I been long in the city?" etc., etc. I was generally requested to call next day, and I would get an answer.

After undergoing this ordeal once, my pride rebelled against such degradation. Rather would I starve than endure it; but then I must starve if I did not, or return to Kentucky—and *that* I would not do until everything failed me. The thought of returning home after setting out so proudly in the consciousness of my self-reliant strength and energy, was too repugnant to be borne. I *would* not go back without being successful, for only think of the ridicule I should undergo in arriving at the little village—out of money, without an occupation, friendless and hopeless—to sink into obscurity and be a pensioner upon the charity of my mother or the bounty of my wealthy brother-in-law. It was unendurable, degrading. I could not bear the ridicule and pity of the whole village even though my noble mother should bless me as a returning prodigal.

Besides the peculiar circumstances under which I had left Millville, would even for a time render it somewnat hazardous for me to return. Could any evidence, stronger than mere rumor, be brought forward, I would be in danger of a heavy fine or imprisonment in the state prison, and even if there was no proof—and there seemed to be none stronger than the finding of a newspaper with my name upon it, which Leonard had thoughtlessly thrown away in his flight—yet still there was danger. I might be mobbed, treated with indignity, and commanded to leave the State, for I was not popular.

No, no, I *could* not—*would* not go back to Kentucky. Then what should be done?

Make another effort among these dry-goods merchants, and endeavor to treat as a matter of always-expectedness their seemingly rude questions and remarks? Doubtless it was the way these things were managed among men of business when a stranger wished to get employment, and was perhaps needful and precautionary in a large city. *I* could not hope to be an exception to such regulations, and it was foolish of me to anticipate it.

Therefore I set off again in search of employment. Going first to the persons I was acquainted with, I told them of my want of success, and asked their advice as to what had better be done.

I really cannot tell, Mr. Trevor," said the one I first called upon, "as you seem to have tried almost every respectable house in the city. The greatest drawback you have to contend against is your want of extensive acquaintance in your own State, and as a last effort, I would advise you to commence at one end of the street and visit every house in succession—by this means you might probably discover what merchants have vacancies in their establishments, and you could then state your case to them and apply for the situation."

He spoke with a cool indifference as though the subject annoyed him, and then rising as though he had business in another part of the house, apologised and left me. The manner was easily interpreted—it said plainly, "Sir, you are a bore and your presence annoys me—I wish you would not come back here again."

Leaving the house, I hardly knew whether to follow his advice or not, and as he had treated me with so much coldness and want of feeling, I determined in my heart never to step within his doors again. And I never did. To go along the street from house to house like a servant-girl hunting a place was *too* humiliating. So I strolled off to Washington Square, intending to pass through it on the way to my boarding-house, and feeling fatigued sat down beneath a tree to rest. "Was it not preferable to endure a little humiliation, here among strangers, where I was not known, if thereby I could secure a profitable situation—was it not preferable to returning to Millville where I could not help but feel humbled also?"

Brooding over the thought I sat for more than a hour, and then as I arose, the question was decided. I would try the plan, to see how I would be received. But I could not go at present, it was too near the hour for dinner—it would be much pleasanter to wait until after I had dined. This was an excellent pretext for postponing the disagreeable duty as long as possible, and I drew a long breath of relief as I arose and left the square.

After dinner I reluctantly compelled myself to set out. No other reasonable excuses for a delay suggested themselves, and leaving my pride at home, and forgetting that my great grandfather was the haughtiest lord in Scotland—nor pausing to consider the angry frown of amazement he would dart upon me, if he knew my present intention—I started for Market-street.

Pausing a moment to read the sign upon the door, so as to know the name of the firm before entering, I walked timidly up through the long piles of boxes and bales of calico and other dry goods, and meeting a clerk with his coat off, asked him if the proprietor was in.

"Walk back to the counting-room, sir. I think Mr. Hardman, the senior partner, is there.

I entered the room, the sides of which were all of glass so as to permit the persons within at any time to look out into the store.

"Mr. Hardman, I presume," said I inquiringly, to a bloated, coarse featured, vulgar-looking man, lounging in a cushioned armchair, with his feet upon the stove, and a segar in his mouth.

"Yes, sir, that is my name," replied the individual, rising with obsequious politeness and offering me a chair—for there was an air of gentility about me, and my clothes were both elegant and fashionable. Perceiving that he took me to be a gentleman who, doubtless, wished to purchase several thousand dollars worth of goods, and supposing from my youthful appearance that fat profits might be expected, I was for a moment embarrassed. To inform him of the object of my visit would at once precipitate me, in his estimation, to an unfathomable depth. He eyed me for a moment with an expression of polite, patient inquiry, and then spoke.

"You wished to see me upon business—did you, sir?"

"Yes, sir, I have called to see if you wish to engage any additional salesman in your establishment," answered I, swallowing a choking sensation in my throat. I am from Kentucky, and in passing through the city I have thought of stopping if I could get a situation in any good, wholesale house."

Mr. Hardman's politeness and deference of manner vanished instantly, and an expression of insolent contemptuousness came over his countenance as he replaced the segar in his lips, and threw himself upon the chair with a yawn of endurance.

"Have you any vacancies in your house, sir, or do you know of any in the city?" I added, as he sat down, and seeing his overbearing manner begin to render itself visible, I at once regained my usual self-possession, and with a languid air took a seat opposite to him, and commenced toying with my watch-chain. Had he treated me with gentlemanly politeness, as his avarice had at first prompted him to do, I might have been embarrassed during the interview, but now his manner had at once restored my self-command. He regarded me for a moment with a glance of supercilious contempt, which I affected not to notice, although it stung me almost to anger.

"How long have you been in the city?"

"Nearly three weeks," I answered, looking up.

"Have you any acquaintances here, or can you give any recommendations as to your former moral character, qualifications, and so forth?"

"I have become acquainted with the Messrs. Blank & Brother, B. B. Coole & Co., and A. & D. Ketcham, since my arrival. These gentlemen are well informed in relation to my father, who formerly bought goods of them, and, I presume, will allow me to refer to them."

"Do you think you know enough about dry goods to fill a situation in a wholesale house, like this of ours?" questioned Mr. Hardman, removing the segar from his lips with his two fingers, and blowing the white smoke above his head, as he surveyed the ceiling with an expression of languid, animal contentment.

"I flatter myself that I do, sir."

"You do, eh?" And he placed the segar between his lips again with a smile of serene satisfaction, and crossed his legs comfortably. "Perhaps you *altogether* flatter yourself upon that point. How long have you been in the business?"

'My father was engaged in the dry goods trade since I was twelve years old, and I have been about the store the greater portion of the time until quite recently."

"You never went to school any, then? or were you sharper than most other boys, and 'cute enough to finish your education at twelve? Can you write a good hand? and what's your age?"

"My hand-writing has been pronounced plain and neat by competent judges, and my age is nineteen," answered I, curbing my indignation.

"Your acquaintance in Kentucky can't be very extensive if you have never lived anywhere else but in this village of—what do you call it? Millville, did you say?—never heard of it before; a little one-horse place, ain't it?"

"I do not know the exact number of inhabitants; but it isn't quite as large as Philadelphia," replied I, coolly.

He laughed, an oleaginous profound laugh, seasoned with contempt, which seemed to rumble over the backs of numberless defunct turtles.

"And what do you rate your valuable services at, Mr. ——?"

"I would be willing to leave that to the gentleman who engaged me," said I, laying marked emphasis upon the word "gentleman."

"Well, I don't think you'd get much without you were to go out to Kentucky again—travel around the State two or three months, and make acquaintances among the country merchants, and then return to the city. You see you don't know anybody; and how can you expect to sell goods if you were to get a situation? I guess I don't want to hire you to-day. Good afternoon, sir. Suppose you can find the way out, although our house is filled to its utmost capacity with goods?"

"So you *hire* your salesmen, do you? In Kentucky we hire negroes; but gentlemen there, in speaking of such matters, make use of the terms 'engage' or 'employ.' Of course, it is not expected that those who have not been brought up in the use of refined and polite language, will use it." I bowed with ironical politeness.

Mr. Hardman stared as though I had twitched his red, bloated nose, but before he had recovered from his amazement at my audacious insolence, I had crossed his door-step, and was half way down the square.—And yet I walked very deliberately.

This adventure did not leave me in a very good humor, but yet I halted after walking a short distance, and entered another wholesale establishment. The room was crowded with clerks and porters, tumbling boxes about, and heaping up great piles of ginghams, lawns, and other dry goods. Inquiring for the senior member of the firm, I was directed to a tall, burly, good-natured looking man, with his coat off, and a pen behind his ear. Taking him aside, I introduced myself and stated my business.

"Don't want any more men than I have at present—too many about the store now—half of them got nothing to do."

The man turned his back upon me, and walked away. I stood for a moment confounded, as I felt the hot blood rushing to my temples, then muttering a curse, hurried out once more to the street.

With little variation, I met with the same treatment at a dozen other places which I visited, so that, at length, I became perfectly indifferent to it, and like a lost female who puts on a brazen face to hide her shame, assumed an air of swaggering levity, and even laughed at the humiliations my pride and sensitiveness underwent. After passing through the busiest portion of Market street, as a *dernier resorte* I stepped into another store, deciding in my mind that if I was unsuccessful in this application, to apply to no others, but give up the search as hopeless. It was the last one upon the street, and beyond it succeeded retail shops, drinking houses, and

restaurants. The only member of the firm who was in received me very kindly, and somewhat soothed by the courteousness of manner and sympathizing patience with which he listened to me, I once more began to hope.

"Who did thee say were the gentlemen whom thee is permitted to give as references?"

I named them, and he drew forth a pencil and wrote their names down in a memorandum book.

"And what part of the Union does thee come from? Kentucky? ah, I do not like that State—they are all slave-drivers there, and besides they don't pay up punctually—have to give them twelve months credit, and then take their notes for six or twelve more, and after all, ten chances to one, lose the debt. Don't think thee would suit us, friend. We don't wish to extend our trade in Kentucky, as we all belong to the Society of Friends, and do not desire to have any dealings with slaveholders. Thee had better apply at some place where Kentuckians trade. I am much pleased with thy countenance, and would much like to employ thee, but the reasons I have named will prevent."

Endeavoring to reason the matter with him, and to convince him that although I came from a slave state, I had had to leave it for being accused of entertaining opinions antagonistic to slavery, yet it was all of no avail. He replied that, then I could influence no trade from Kentucky, and as I was acquainted in no other State, my services as a salesman would not be worth anything to him.

"Well, do you not want a copying clerk, or a person to attend to any kind of writing?"

"We have not much writing to do, and have clerks sufficient to do that.. Thee had better apply at some other house. I wish thee well. Good afternoon, friend."

And I was gone. The afternoon had been wasted in these fruitless efforts—the sun had set, and twilight was coming on. In hopeless dejection of spirit, which in my state of nervous sensitiveness, was fast working itself up to despair, I walked rapidly, reck-

lessly onward. Crossing Broad-street as the twilight grew thicker and darker, and the lamplighters began to light the gas, I rushed onwards without knowing or caring whither. I was approaching the outskirts of the city—every other house was a drinking shop. lager bier signs met me at the windows, and upon the pavement sat loquacious, jolly Irishmen swearing and smoking—grave Germans, losing themselves amid clouds of smoke, and discoursing at intervals as they sipped their dearly loved lager.

All, all were happy, and their joyous, animal laughter at the gambols and merry chatterings of their children playing upon the street before them, struck upon my ears so discordantly that involuntarily quickening my steps, I was soon out of reach of the sound.

Starting as if from some vague, troubled dream, my feet struck the hollow sounding floor of the bridge—I had reached the Schuylkill, and paused to look over into it. Twilight had settled upon the river, and came floating down with the black, sluggish current. Stars seemed dimly striving to glimmer through it, and the sullen dash of the waters against the abutments, sounded to my ears dreamily, and murmured of peace.

" O that I could believe there was no hell hereafter, and that the only punishment was in this life, how quickly would I seek rest, and endless joy by a plunge through the dark sullen waves, and my soul with an exulting shout should rush upon swift-cleaving pinions through yon starry ether, to seek the realms of the Immortals. But I cannot have faith—I have tried—it is so full of poetry—the thought that God will not punish the sins of this short life, by an unending eternity of torments."

Alas, doubts came upon me, I believed, but yet feared to test my belief. A low, sad voice whispered to my soul, of suicide—it was the only remedy. Trembling fearfully, I looked around—no one was visible, and again I leaned my elbows upon the parapet of the bridge, and gazed down into the sluggish water which reflected the mirrored radiance of the stars. O life!

" Thou art so full of misery,
Were it not better not to be!"

If I but knew that in the other world I would not be an intruder—if I but believed—as I strive in vain to do—that there is no punishment beyond this life, how quickly would I unclose the cage, and let the soul, like a weary dove, fly away to its native heaven. "Father! that hast passed before me, speak, oh speak from that world of eternal glory, and tell me the secrets of its shadowy confines."

I did not cry aloud—no, I uttered not a sound with my lips, the wild, wailing voice went up only from my soul, but bending over the parapet of the bridge, with straining, earnest eyes and listening ear, I vainly attempted to pierce the driving mist which seemed to thicken and enshroud me as it drifted down the river.

But no answer came, for the dead cannot break the awful oath of secrecy which death imposes, and doubtless feel not, even if aware of the sorrows of the living. Still leaning forward in trembling expectancy, as though a voice could come to me from the far away regions of the blessed—I heard a distant, rumbling sound, as of wheels upon the bridge—the sound became more distinct, and drew gradually nearer. It was an open carriage with several men in it, talking and laughing gaily. Turning suddenly as they approached, I felt a painful, instantaneous rush of blood to my head. My vision grew dim—my limbs refused a support—I leaned wearily upon the parapet—slipped—fell—down! down!—Darkness came upon me and I was not!

CHAPTER LII.

I HEARD a rushing, roaring sound in my ears, that seemed to die slowly away. I clutched my hands wildly and opened my eyes. Dashing rapidly onward, as the dimly-defined crescent of the moon sunk and faded from my sight, I thought myself in the water, the cold, chilling water of the river, and shuddering, threw aloft my arms and—clasped an extended hand.

"Where—where am I?"

"In a carriage, and rolling rapidly down Chestnut street—do you not see the lights flashing in the windows? or have you not yet recovered from the swoon?"

"And whose voice is that?" said I, grasping the cushions and sitting up.

"Have you so soon forgotten it, Edgar?"

"What! is it you, Sir Charles Crawford?" exclaimed I haughtily, "stop the carriage, sir, and allow me to alight."

"No, no, dear Edgar, what means this strange behavior?—my arm saved your life."

I was silent.

"Have you not been at Millville and —"

"Enough! say no more, Edgar, see, we are not alone."

I looked around perplexed and confused. Sir Charles seeing it, and seeking perhaps to divert my thoughts, presented his companions, and commenced a gay and animated conversation, in which he sought to engage me. But I did not feel much like talking, and as my temples still pained and throbbed feverishly, I reclined upon the seat and wearily closed my eyes. "Could I have fallen into the river?" I asked myself. My clothes were apparently dry, and

yet I seemed to fall from some great height, and then the darkness came over me, and all else was forgotten.

The carriage suddenly whirled aside, drew up at the curbstone, and unclosing my eyes, the brilliant lights of the Girard House flashed upon me. My companions alighted, and Sir Charles stepping out after them, turned tenderly and gave his hand to me. The gentle, affectionate manner, and the troubled, sympathizing expression of his features, touched me to the heart. I forgave him, and cast away the bitterness which my heart had cherished, since receiving my mother's letter. I stood dizzily upon the pavement.

"I must go to my lodgings now, Sir Charles, I am *very, very* grateful," said I faintly, pressing my forehead with my hand.

"You must go with me, Edgar, you are unwell—come, I will have no refusal."

He had dismissed his companions with a bow, and we were alone. We ascended the steps, and after a long, tiresome walk, as it seemed to me, at length reached his suite of apartments. He told me to lie down in his bed-room, and recover from my fatigue. Entering the sumptuously furnished chamber, filled with all the appliances of modern luxury, I obeyed silently, unresistingly, and without removing my clothes, fell upon the white, snowy bed—what a luxury to the one I had slept upon for the last three weeks—and as the cool, fragrant linen of the pillows calmed my excited nerves, sank to sleep.

Awaking at some slight noise, I looked up. Sir Charles was sitting at a table in the same room, reading by a shaded lamp. In an adjoining apartment the cloth had been spread for supper, and I could see delicacies upon the table through the open door. As I moved, my companion gazed anxiously towards the bed.

"Are you awake, Edgar?" He approached and placed his soft hand soothingly upon my forehead. "The feverish heat has left your temples, and the slumber has calmed your excited nerves. Supper is waiting, will you eat something?"

Sir Charles rang the bell for his valet, and gave him some direc-

tions as I bathed my face and head in water, and ran my fingers carelessly through my hair. I still felt weak and exhausted from the excitement and want of food, for I had eaten nothing since two o'clock in the afternoon, and now it was past ten.

Approaching the mirror, I started back in surprise at sight of my pale, haggard features, and the dark, purple rings about my eyes. Reëntering the room softly, Sir Charles came close behind me.

"Isn't it a handsome face you see?—those dark eyes, with their long, fringed lashes and wondrous spirituelle expression, and those smooth, peachy cheeks, are all too rarely seen, and too greatly valued, to be food for fishes."

"And did I then fall into the river?" exclaimed I, turning abruptly.

"You would have fallen had not I leaped from the carriage and prevented you. As it was, you only swooned from over-excitement and nervousness. And now, Edgar, will you permit me to ask what took you away to the Schuylkill bridge at such a time of night, or is your presence there a secret? In fact, what brings you to this city at all?"

I stammered and changed color as our eyes met.

"My presence at the river was accidental. Maddened and rendered desperate by insolent treatment, I rushed heedlessly along the street, and walking rapidly on, on—I soon came to the bridge; I paused, and was looking for peace in the dark waters, when your carriage drove up. You know the rest better than I."

Supper was now ready, and we sat down to the table. Inquiring what had induced me to leave Washington, I told my companion—I should say my friend—all that had befallen me since we met in the Library at the Capitol."

"And why did you leave Mr. Eldon's, Edgar?" he asked when I had concluded, for I had not explained to him the cause, nor in fact given any reason for my abrupt departure.

"That, Sir Charles, I must beg you not to ask me."

He bowed, and sent the servants out of the room. We continued

sitting at the table, and as the light fell upon my friend's face, I saw that he was laboring under some powerful emotion, and rightly divining the cause, interrupted him :—

"You need not cause me or yourself needless embarrassment, Sir Charles. You have been at Millville—you would tell me of it—I know all."

"And your mother has rejected me the third time, Edgar. I need not tell you, for you say you know it all. Did she write to you of our interview ?"

"Yes."

"Can you not influence her, Edgar?" exclaimed he, suddenly, rising from the table and grasping my hand. "Write to your mother that I have saved your life; tell her that I still love her as madly as when she was young and unmarried. By heaven! I cannot help it—I try to curb myself—I chain down my heart, and dance upon its coffin; but immediately that I see you, all control is lost, and the passion, like a delirium, again masters me. You have boundless sway over your mother; she doats upon you, idolizes you; and *I* have saved you to her when, with impetuous blindness, you sought self-destruction. Go back to her from me; tell her all this; beg, entreat upon your knees, and wealth, uncounted wealth, shall be yours. I will adopt you as my son. You have refined, luxurious tastes, Edgar. You would stand transfixed before a magnificent painting as you wandered amidst the art galleries of Europe, and be awed to your knees before those glorious breathing statues which you have, as yet, only read of and visited in your dreams; I know it; I read it in your eyes. You are an enthusiast and a worshiper of the Beautiful, and should lead a life lapped in luxury, or your fastidious sensitiveness will render you miserable. And then think of the numberless pleasures—of costly, delicate food—the gratification of your passional, voluptuous dreams of women, beautiful as Houris, and as endearingly frail—the magnificence of equipage—the superb horses—the treasures of the choicest library in Scotland—the envy of the under classes, and the eager

attentions of the high-born and wealthy. All, all shall be yours! I will give you a separate allowance, amply sufficient to enable you to indulge all these fastidious tastes, can you but induce your mother to accept my hand, and become Lady Madelaine Crawford."

His eyes gleamed with the fire of passion, his lips quivered, and his whole frame exhibited symptoms of extraordinary excitement. I underwent all imaginable kinds of emotion during his speech, and when he had concluded, and still grasping my powerless hand, gazed expectingly into my eyes,—I could not answer him.

The picture he had drawn of the life I might lead by interceding for him with my mother, had fired my imagination. I could now appreciate most exquisitely this ease and luxury, after the experiences I had undergone within the last few weeks, of what might be anticipated from the poverty-cursed future. Circumstances were very much changed *now* to what they had been when I first received my mother's letter at Washington city. *Then* it had roused all my indignation, for I was hopeful, surrounded by the refinements of opulence, and the future seemed to have so much happiness in store for me, that the inducements which my mother's suitor had held out to us had not so much excited desire, as prompted disgust. I had seen one hope after another give way and vanish, and what was there now to expect? Friendless in a strange city, and far from a home which I dared not return to for fear of persecution—stung almost to madness by the rudeness of the world, which I had just encountered in trying to get into some honest employment—my pride crushed beyond endurance by the humiliations I had subjected myself to—what wonder that I should now listen to Sir Charles without indignation, and with feelings almost of pleasure!

His words, poured forth in such enthusiastic ardor, pointed out to me a way through all my troubles, and showed me how I might revenge myself upon the world which had spurned me as a poor, honest seeker after employment. And what was there so very disagreeable about my friend after all? My mother was only prejudiced, and might be induced to overcome it; and if she could not,

why she might wed Sir Charles for the sake of her children. These thoughts passed rapidly through my mind as the Baronet held my hand, and watched the changes upon my countenance.

"Then only think of the happiness you will confer upon me, Edgar!—this I have not mentioned, for it would be selfish in me to think of myself before you and your mother."

Wavering and hesitating, I suffered him to retain my hand. He perceived that I was about to come over to him.

"Say but the word, Edgar!—ah, joy and bliss divine! The world once more is worth living for—life again brightens, and the clouds of years lift from my horizon and vanish before the day-spring of my happiness."

He clasped me to his arms, and as his hot, fœtid breath saluted my nostrils, I closed my lips tightly and endured it in silence, akin to disgust. The movement had almost cost him the loss of the happiness—or rather the loss of the effort to obtain it—of which he seemed so overjoyed. Was I not making a bargain with the evil one, and bartering away the peace and rest of a loved parent, for the wealth and glory of the world? The man had called himself Beelzebub when I had first seen him in the wood at Aspenwold, and was he not now playing the part of a Tempter?

"Get thee behind me Satan," but no, the world which he had shown me from the top of the high mountain of his imagination, was too alluring—I *could* not forego it, no, not even at the price of ——. Conscience, avaunt—trouble me no more!

"I will go, Sir Charles, and plead your case, and if I fail—"

"But you cannot, Edgar, I know you cannot if you are but sincere.—I rest all hopes upon your effort. Will you be able to start to-morrow? You shall have a cheque for a thousand dollars for your outfit, for I am determined that my handsome, young ambassador shall return to the little village in a style of befitting splendor. Think of the revenge—delicious as a sweet morsel—this will afford you, as you outshine the wealthiest, who have looked down upon you in your proud lowliness, and hated you the possession of

talents and the want of wealth. You must provide yourself with the costliest clothing the city can afford, and as you arrive in Kentucky hire a carriage, valet, and all necessary servants, and enter Millville in the style of a lord. Heavens! how those spiteful little villagers will stare," and the Baronet chuckled and rubbed his hands in high glee. "The very ones who, perhaps, treated you most coolly, and slandered and vilified you, now that they see you surrounded by the holy halo of the almighty dollar, will be the first to sink upon their delicately-hinged knees and be-sycophant you. And to-morrow you will start.—Pen and ink, Jacques!"

The valet entered with writing utensils, and Sir Charles wrote off a cheque upon his banker for a thousand dollars, and thrust it into my unresisting hand.

"Cheer up, Edgar, has the danger I rescued you from clouded your soul with sadness?—wine is a stimulant.—Jacques, bring us wine, quickly! quickly! We will drink to the health of the future member of Parliament, the Right Hon. Sir Edgar Trevor. Ha! how bright the flash from your eyes. Isn't it absurd to think of toiling and drudging away the bright, youthful years of life in the search for gold with which to enjoy the remainder of ones existence, when, by a glorious stroke of fortune, we have wealth heaped upon us before age has dimmed the keenness of our appetite for pleasure, or burned out the voluptuous passionateness of our natures!"

The valet entered with wine. His master poured out the sparkling, dancing nectar and pressed it upon me. I took it eagerly and raised it to my lips.

"All hail to thee, Sir Edgar, that shalt be great hereafter!"

We bowed, touched our glasses and drained them wildly.

"More—give me more—it is divine!" I exclaimed, like Cyclops, as he quaffed the wine of Outis. We drank to the health of the future Lady Crawford—we drank—*I* to forget my scruples in the narcotic fumes—Sir Charles to exalt his pleasure and steep his joy in dreams that he deemed realized. At midnight, drowned amid a sea of wine, I slept, nor deemed myself a suicide.

I awoke next morning in a magnificently furnished apartment. The soft light falling through richly-curtained windows was dim and sensuously voluptuous. Calling the valet, I asked him what o'clock it was, as I rubbed my eyes and yawned under the influence of a slight headache.

"Eleven, sir. Shall I order breakfast? Sir Charles has gone out to take his morning walk until you should awake."

"Yes, Jacques, order breakfast."

Creeping languidly from the snowy sheets, I looped aside the heavy curtains and began to dress. I felt a calm, delightful sensation of happiness as I laved my face in the cool water and contrasted my condition with what is was the day previous.

'Jacques, is there a bath-room attached to this suite of rooms?"

"Yes, Mr. Trevor, I think there is."

He opened a side door and bowed me in. I entered as Adam entered Eden, and returned glowing and refreshed. The afternoon was spent in making purchases, for I would not commence the journey to Kentucky until the next day.

Driving along Market-street, we passed the stately store-rooms of some of the very men whom I had almost begged to employ me as a clerk the day before. Our turn-out was very splendid, with its liveried servants and coat-of-arms. Omnibus drivers opened their eyes in astonishment at the high-bred coursers, and draymen gazed at the equipage as though it had been Cindarella's. We neared the store of Mr. Hardman, as that oleaginous and self-complacent individual was standing on his door-step, smoking a most companionable segar. He gazed in ludicrous amazement, and then rubbed his eyes and peered again. I perceived that he had recognized me. The street was here crowded and obstructed, the carriage moved slowly and approached the curb-stone. Mr. Hardman stared, smiled with the warmth of a July morning, and removing his hat, bowed profoundly. I returned his salute with a look of languid astonishment, and affected to be inspecting the signs upon the houses.

"The gentleman in the door bowed to you, Edgar!" said Sir Charles.

"To me!—O, impossible, he dosen't know me."

The carriage turned into Chestnut-street, and requesting my friend to set me down at the office of Gunter's Magazine, we halted. The liveried footman opened the door, and I sprang out and ran up the steps.

"I have called to receive the money for the story you published in this month's magazine, Mr. Gunter."

"Dear me, sir, I haven't it, but if you'll call to-morrow I'll make arrangements with my publisher to pay you."

"For fear that the small sum should exhaust your exchequer, Mr. Gunter, I will not trouble you, as I shall leave your city to-morrow. Adieu," and I bowed and was gone.

CHAPTER LIII.

Reaching Cincinnati on my route to Millville, I hired a splendid carriage and two gray horses, a coachman, footman and valet, as Sir Charles had directed, and from thence went up the Ohio river, to Maysville. At this place there commences an excellent McAdamised road to the interior of Kentucky, passing through many of its most fertile counties. After remaining a day or two, to recover from the fatigue of hasty travel, I set out for Millville.

Arriving in sight of the village, the same day, just at sunset, I ordered the coachman and footman to alight about half a mile from the place, brush the dust from the carriage, and rub up the horses, so as to present as fresh and brilliant an appearance as possible. It was done, and we slowly entered. I reclined luxuriously within to observe the stares of surprise and admiration which I knew the appearance of the turn-out would excite. Nor was I disappointed in my expectations, for my vanity was fully gratified. Some of the villagers recognized me and looked still more wonderingly.

Driving through the main street of the place, I at length arrived at the little gate of my mother's humble home. I had been absent several months, and now returning fresh from the stately and magnificent mansions of a large city, how humble and mean everything appeared to me. My eyes seemed to have been rubbed with some potent magical ointment, and I asked myself in astonishment, how could I ever have lived in this place so long and never before have been aware of its inferiority. The houses were so small, the windows so contracted, and the gaudy residence of Squire Nixon which I had formerly thought very fine, now dwindled into ludic-

rously insignificant proportions. I was like the renowned Lemuel Gulliver, when he was picked up by the sea captain, in his floating box, and could scarcely forbear smiling at the diminutive scale upon which everything was arranged.

The streets, like those of all country villages in Kentucky, were overgrown with grass and dog-fennel, and looked so dull and stupid that I involuntarily yawned.

Drawing up to the gate, the carriage stopped—the footman alighted, and touching his hat, opened the door, and held it until I alighted. My mother and sisters were sitting in the little portico in front of the house, and as it was some distance down to the gate, did not seem to recognize me. I smiled slily as I observed their strange looks, and opening the gate like one perfectly familiar with it, walked slowly towards them.

"O, it is Edgar! it is Edgar!" cried Bel, running to meet me in her joyous impulsiveness, and throwing her arms around my neck, she kissed me. My mother and Helen followed and greeted me with such affecting warmth and tenderness, that the tears came to my eyes.

"How pale and aristocratic you look, Edgar, and what graceful city airs you have acquired. I shall be almost ashamed to ask such a *distingue* looking gentleman to enter my humble cottage. But what mystery is all this," she added, as we reached the little porch and sat down. "Whence comes this splendid equipage, and these servants, and how can you afford to travel in such style?"

"I'll explain it all when I get time, mother."

Aunt Kitty and Felix came hurriedly out as they heard my voice, and started back in involuntary awe as they touched my extended hand, and answered my inquiries. The undisguised expression of admiration upon their faces was the truest homage that had yet been paid to my changed and improved appearance.

Helen and Bel overwhelmed me with questions, and my mother sat by and smiled as I told them of all I had seen, and attempted

to describe the charming Mrs. Derby, of whom they were extremely desirous to hear, as I had mentioned her so often in my letters.

What a hero my sisters made of me as they listened, and regarded me with such looks of admiring fondness!

"And our brother—dear, charming fellow—is an author too!" exclaimed Bel, as I happened to name Mr. Gunter. "Ah, we have all read you, M. Alphonso Devereux, and Gunter's Magazine has gone the rounds of the village. You can't imagine what a great man— what a lion —you have become, Edgar. I wish Fanny was here; but we'll all go out to Ashley and astonish her to-morrow."

"Excellent!—we can drive out in the carriage and surprise her! But are you going to starve me? Upon my word, I have not had anything to eat for hours!"

My mother went in to arrange the supper table, and found that she had been anticipated by Aunt Kitty, who had loaded it with all kinds of luxuries obtainable in the village, and amid delightful conversation, the winged moments flew rapidly away. I observed that my mother seemed uneasy and nervous, notwithstanding her evident efforts to appear gay. My happiness became clouded, as I observed her expression, and a feeling such as the banqueting guests of Damocles experienced, when they looked above them and saw the sword suspended by its single thread, came upon me. The mystery of the carriage and servants, and my richness and elegance of dress, must be explained.

I dreaded it.

What a mine would be sprung by naming the errand upon which I had returned! When we had concluded supper, my mother left the table to go into her own chamber. Seeing that this movement was intended as a delicate hint to me to follow, and telling Helen and Bel to excuse me, as I wished to speak with mother, I arose and left them.

"Make haste and get back, Edgar, we have so much to ask you, and something to tell also."

Helen changed color at this remark, and Bel smiled.

We were alone—my mother and I. Knowing that the longer I sought to conceal the real object of my visit, the more embarrassing it would become to both of us, I broached the subject boldly as soon as I entered.

The effect was appalling! I cannot, dare not describe it. Bitterly, O, bitterly did I curse myself for being tempted by Sir Charles Crawford into such a scheme! That look! that tortured expression of the face! that gesture! O, my God! they haunt me yet. I can never, never forget them!

It was enough—I dared not name the subject again. My mother had fainted, and swoon succeeded swoon in rapid succession. The physician was called, and at midnight, soothed by opiates, she slept a troubled sleep. And *I*——?

Raved like a madman, for I had done it all. Then, after leaving my mother's side, I sought my own little room, which I had not yet entered since my return, and writhed in agony. Nothing was changed, and just as I had left it upon the Tuesday of October, so all now appeared to me. My books, defaced with pencil marks, and my gun and fishing-rod were in their old places. But the peace, the hope of my youth?—gone, gone forever!

I wished to write to Sir Charles, and return him his presents and his gold. The carriage should be paid for and sent back. My hand trembled with agitation as I sat down. I regretted for myself and sisters the loss of the pleasures we had so glowingly pictured. I pitied Sir Charles, for I well knew the effect my announcement would produce; but O, I pitied my mother more—infinitely more than all!

When she recovered, and became calm and composed, what agonies she would suffer as she accused, condemned herself as the only obstacle to the fulfillment of hopes and dreams that ambitious, and wildly improbable as they seemed, she might yet have realized for her children. Our soothing affection could never assure her that she was forgiven, for in her first letter to me, she had expressed doubts as to the propriety of her conduct, and now that *I* had as-

sumed the side of Sir Charles, and attempted to plead his cause, those doubts would become stronger. Only a mother yearning with love for her children, and detained by the awful grasp of duty or repugnance from conferring upon them a mighty boon, can appreciate, or understand the sorrows that must be silently endured, for they cannot be shared. I told Sir Charles all—I entreated him to take back everything, and allow me to sink into obscurity and be forgotten. The letter was finished and sealed—the die was cast, and now for me the future was a lone, barren waste.

I lay down upon the bed, but slumber visits not such troubled souls. Tossing wildly, feverishly, I dashed myself upon the pillows like a lost wreck amid furious waves. Sleep I could not, and arising, I dressed, and stealing softly down stairs, opened the door noiselessly—and listening to hear if my mother was quiet—stepped out into the garden. The horned moon lay sorrowfully in the far-away ether. Stars looked calmly down in their changeless brightness upon the petty troubles of mortals, and the night air seemed dewy with their tears. Ah, it is well that there is a something beyond this life where the agonies of earth no more reach the soul, and joy and peace are eternal! It was long past midnight, and brushing the dew from the grass, I bathed my aching temples—walked a far distance, and wearily returning, threw myself upon my bed and slept.

CHAPTER LIV.

A WEEK had passed, and I yet remained at Millville, for my sister Helen was to be married. I had visited Cora, and although she seemed to me somewhat thinner and paler than when I last saw her, yet she was still wondrously beautiful. Her cheeks would flush with excitement as she spoke, and her luminous eyes kindle with the enthusiasm of noble thoughts. We met as two summer clouds that had been parted by the storms of the equinox, and now floated into an embrace. One being, one existence, one hope animated us. We gathered together our sorrows, and dissolved them away with our tears—we gazed through each others eyes, and the earth was once more of sunshine, and the nights brightly paved with stars.

"You will stay with us, Edgar, and not go back to the world again. You will forget the excitements and gaieties of city life, in the peaceful quiet of the village."

She laid her soft, fair hand upon mine, and turned her dark, dreamy eyes upon me, to listen for my answer.

"But pride and duty compel me to leave here, Cora. I cannot remain an idler upon my mother's bounty. The field of life stretches broadly before me, and I must glean my own subsistence. I shall go to the West, Cora."

There were persuasions eloquent as the whisperings of the Immortals, there were sighs, tears and doubts—then a great calm succeeded, and we parted in silence amid the twilight. O my God! to leave her again after this—and all for what?

The thought of all I should have to endure in the future, from the combined evils of poverty, and a want of stern unflinching

energy of purpose, threw a cloud of sadness upon my present existence and oppressed me unspeakably.

But I would forget what might have been, had my mother acted differently, and smile and enjoy the present.—Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. My sister Helen's marriage day was fixed—the preparations were making for the bridal. I should remain in Millville until after the ceremony.

My mother listened to me with a sorrowful interest, as I told her of my plans. She could not oppose, and yet she begged me with her mute, saddened eyes, to stay with her now that Helen was going away. She seemed to have grown visibly paler and more easily excited since my return, and she that was wont to pride herself upon her strong mind and patience of endurance, was now excessively nervous and weak. Several times I had entered her room without announcing my approach, and had found her sitting in loneliness and tears. But yet Sir Charles Crawford was never named by either of us, and the past was sacred as a new-made grave.

" To think of all that I have deprived you of, my Edgar, by this stubborn refusal—when I remember it I can never cease to weep bitter, bitter tears, my bright-eyed boy, and what have *I* to offer you?"

" Do not speak of the past, my mother, I beseech you ; you cannot marry him, you shrink from it with disgust, and do I blame you ?"

" No, but your life blames me, Edgar—ah ! that, that you cannot conceal." She fell upon my neck and wept, and it was long, long, before I could succeed in comforting her and calming her agitation.

Helen's wedding day drew near. My mother shook off her weight of sorrow, and with smiles, that reminded me of former, happy days, welcomed its approach. The bridegroom, Mr. Seaforth, was to arrive from Louisville, and they were to be married in the presence of only a few friends. They were then to start for Niagara, Saratoga, and make a tour of the eastern cities. The prepara-

tions were complete and the day was Wednesday, and then Helen would leave us for a stranger's home. It might be—and was—a home of luxurious refinement, for Mr. Seaforth was wealthy, but still it was not the home of her youth. Hèlen—though the family register told she was in her twenty-fifth year—did not look much older than Fanny, and the animation which the excitement gave to her expression, made her appear really beautiful. I had never yet seen my future brother-in-law, but if he was as old as my mother stated in her letter, I suspicioned that Helen was merely marrying him for his money, for I knew she was proud and equally ambitious with myself, though less demonstrative and outwardly enthusiastic. She had refused numberless offers from respectable young men of the village, whose only objection appeared to be their want of wealth and position. Mr. Seaforth had both, and therefore—thought I—Mr. Seaforth was graciously accepted.

My mother did not attempt to interfere with Helen's decision. She knew, from personal friends in Louisville—where the gentleman had resided for many years—that he was highly respected, and of elevated, social position. If Helen wished to marry him she saw no reason to object to it. She was now old enough to "know her own mind," as the saying is, and so my mother gave her consent.

The morning came, and with it came the bridegroom, in an elegantly appointed carriage, accompanied by two friends and a minister from a neighboring town, as our resident pastor was absent from the village.

He alighted, and coming up the gravel pathway to the house, shook hands cordially with my mother, who went to the door to receive him, and then presented his companions. They all entered the parlor, and my mother introduced me and the assembled company to the bridegroom. He was not good looking, in the strict sense of the word—at least I did not so consider him, but yet he had that air of genteel elegance of manner, which is usually denominated "decidedly gentleman-like." Being a bachelor of forty, there was, as a matter of course, something rather prim and precise-looking

about him. I noticed that his gloves fitted without a wrinkle, and was wondering how in the world he ever succeeded in getting his hands into them, when my mother concluded the presentations, and Mr. Seaforth approached and took a seat beside Cora and myself.

Observing him more closely, now that he commenced talking, I perceived a peculiar expression about his eyes. To me—who watched him closely—it seemed to betoken a want of the finer feelings of human nature—a lack of the delicate appreciative faculties necessary to render a woman of refinement contented and happy, and even to reveal a certain harshness and imperiousness of manner, which, though now apparently subdued, might at any little provocation break forth, like a slumbering volcano, into ungovernable passion.

"And so you have just returned from Washington, Mr. Trevor, your mother tells me. Pray, how were you pleased with the city?"

He smiled with a self-complacent condescension, and exhibited his teeth, which were very white and regular, but did not look altogether natural. They were like his manners, I thought, and the even smoothness could not altogether conceal the want of sincerity.

"I did not go much into society during my short visit, but was exceedingly well pleased with what I saw."

"I was there several years ago myself, and thought the place very corrupt. You, I presume, being the guest of Mr. Eldon, formerly a wealthy banker, whom I have heard of, doubtless had opportunities of meeting many refined people."

"Yes, Mr. Eldon treated me with extreme kindness, and it was through his influence that I received the appointment of private secretary to the late General Clarke. He wished me to remain with him even after the death of the ambassador, and would have adopted me as his son."

"And why did you not do so?" asked Mr. Seaforth, looking at me with an expression that an attorney might assume when examining a witness of whose veracity he was somewhat doubtful. The look roused all the dislike which I had instinctively felt from the

first glance at him, and I was about to reply with some asperity of tone, when he was called away. The minister was waiting; the bride tarried for the bridegroom.

"If my first impressions do not deceive me," said I, turning to Cora, "Helen will find it more difficult to live agreeably with that man than she anticipates."

"I think him harsh and cold," replied Cora, "but we may both be deceived."

Mr. Seaforth reëntered the apartment, with my sister upon his arm.

"See, they are coming forward, Cora, and the ceremony proceeds."

Deep stillness reigned, and the minister commenced the prefatory remarks customary upon such occasions. I expected to hear him repeat the stereotyped phrase, so degrading to a proud-spirited, noble woman—"will you, or do you, here promise to love, honor, and *obey* this man in all things?" etc—but was agreeably disappointed, for the obnoxious word, which the Americans have inherited from their wife-whipping English ancestors, was omitted, and "respect" substituted for it. The company noticed the change and smiled, and Mr. Seaforth, who could not have avoided remarking the omission, looked as though nothing had occurred more than he had expected. As it was the first time he had been married within a period of forty years, it may be presumed that the slight embarrassment which came upon him rendered his hearing rather indistinct. Helen looked so gracefully easy and self-possessed, that I could not remove my eyes from her. When the word "*obey*"—which may do very well for Turkish women to pronounce as they kneel at the feet of their absolute lords, but does not altogether agree with the refinements of the age—when the word was omitted, Helen was looking at me, and a slight, very slight, smile curled her lip.

"We will omit that word too, Cora," said I, softly, "and say, 'love, honor, and love.' Only imagine a minister asking you to obey *me!* Isn't it laughably absurd?"

She blushed, and bit her fan with a most bewitching awkwardness.

The company were congratulating the bride, and the room was a scene of gay, animated bustle and confusion. Mrs. Helen Seaforth kissed me, and wrung my hand in silence, and then turned to Cora.

"You will write to me, Helen, soon, very soon?"

"Surely, dear Edgar, from the first place of interest at which we arrive."

She left the room to prepare for the journey. Returning, habited in an exquisitely neat traveling dress, she kissed us all again, and bidding us adieu, with tears upon her long eye-lashes, sprang into the carriage. Mr. Seaforth's farewell was cordial and affectionate, and he favored us with pressing invitations to visit him as soon as he and Helen should return from their bridal tour. A moment more, and amidst the waving of snowy handkerchiefs and wafted kisses, the carriage was gone.

Fanny and Willis remained with us, for my mother was very much saddened and depressed, and my sister's sprightly animation cheered her, and kept us all in a genial, good humor.

I could not altogether account for my mother's strange depression, and began to think that perhaps she also had felt the peculiarly disagreeable sensation come over her in Mr. Seaforth's presence which both I, and Cora, had experienced.

With all Fanny's flow of animal spirits and unceasing good humor, my mother would ever and anon lapse into sorrowfulness, for in a very short time I also should be gone, and none left to cheer her loneliness but Bel. Accompanying Cora to her home, I lingered at the door, and we commenced talking over the events of the day

"Everything produces such an effect upon my mother now. She was not formerly so easily moved, or so sensitive."

"And therefore you should not leave her, Edgar."

"My absence will only be temporary. I shall not remain but a few months in the West."

"Ah! if I had such a mother as yours, I should never be absent from her."

"And you, poor Cora, have none! Has she been dead long?"

She became somewhat agitated at this question, and hid her face with her handkerchief. Had the loss, then, been so recent that she could not yet bear to speak of it? I had never heard her mention her mother at all, and seemed often surprised at her silence, concluding naturally enough that she had died when Cora was an infant, and could not retain any recollection of her.

"Pardon me; I did not intend to wound your feelings; we will speak of something else."

She pressed the tears back, and by an effort calmed her agitation.

"The night air chills me, and I have a cough, dear Edgar. Good night," said Cora, abruptly.

I clasped her extended hand, and bidding her be careful, and not let the cough she spoke of grow worse by neglect, I mournfully left her. An expression of pain was upon her face, and her glorious, starry eyes looked sad and sorrowful.

I wandered homeward in troubled perplexity.

"What strange emotion she exhibited at the mere mention of her mother!" I murmured. "She may not be dead, as I understood it, but some domestic mystery, perchance, renders her dead to Cora."

"When do *you* leave me, Edgar?" asked my mother, in a tone of hopeless despondency, as I entered the room where she sat reading. Bel and Fanny were out in the garden with Willis, for the moon was full, and the night beautiful.

"I would never part from you, my mother, if it were possible to remain. But what can I do in Millville?"

"Alas! you speak truly, Edgar: there is nothing in this obscure place for one like you. I should not wish to detain you, for I have already blighted your fairest prospects, and should not seek to injure you farther. Will you be long absent, my boy?"

"Only a few months, mother; and if I do not succeed, I shall return instantly to Millville."

"I cannot bear to speak of it, Edgar. Good night, my son—and amid the trials and turmoils of the life which awaits you, do not, O, do not abhor me for being the innocent cause of bringing them upon you! A word to Sir Charles Crawford, and, ah! how different had this been!"

"That word, my mother, had perhaps doomed *you* to misery and long years of anguish, and I thank God that you did not utter it!"

I spoke with earnest feeling and emphasis. My mother came towards me, and kissed my temples in silent thankfulness. The murmur of a prayer reached my ears, and as we separated for the night, my mother's old peacefulness and calm serenity seemed to return to her.

"God will yet reward and bless you, Edgar, notwithstanding the loss of the pleasures promised by Sir Charles."

CHAPTER LV.

A WEEK after this conversation, I was seated in the last of a long train of cars, and from the back window, where the view is always best, if there is any to be seen at all—gazed out upon the flat, monotonous surface of Indiana. We were to reach the capitol of the State by noon—at least the conductor assured me that was the hour the train was due, and he was determined to make time or " burst a boiler." On we rushed with a shriek, and din, and clatter, and roaring mighty noise, through ancient, marshy forests, with logs lying decayed, and covered with moss, while the underbrush grew up so thick and luxuriant, that you could scarce penetrate into the sunless recesses—past log huts smoking from the roof and without windows—over long stretches of sedgy meadow land, and on! on! over wooden bridges with reckless velocity—past dark tarns and slimy pools, resonant with jubilant bull frogs, concertizing upon the banks—then dashing in sight of long rows of little white frame buildings, with green shutters, and nearing smoky furnaces or machine shops with hammers beating upon sheet iron, resounding ceaseless clamor.

" The city, sir, here is the depôt."

And I alighted in the capitol of Indiana. Repairing to the " crack" hotel, as newspaper reporters style the first class houses, I determined to remain there until I could secure a pleasant room in some private boarding house. I strolled out after dinner, and was not a little surprised at the appearance of unfinished newness which the streets, houses, shops, and everything about the place, presented. It was very different from our Kentucky towns of the same population, and rather disappointed me. Nevertheless, as I

had determined to make it my residence for a few months, I soon began to please myself, and cease to find fault. My object in coming to Indianapolis had been to try and form a connection with some of the newspapers published there. Should the scheme prove a failure, I had brought a letter of introduction from my brother-in-law, Willis, to a business man of the city, and determined to accept a clerkship in a dry goods store, even, if nothing better offered. I had not yet delivered this letter, and did not intend to, unless unsuccessful in my application to the editors. The first one I called upon was the proprietor of the "Daily Freeman," a paper with a very extensive circulation, and said to be ably conducted. Walking into the office one morning, I saw a middle aged man with spectacles upon his nose, sitting at a desk in one corner of the room, busily engaged in writing.

"Is Mr. Blackly in?" I asked, bowing politely as the gentleman turned his head, and with a ferocious scowl, looked towards the doorway. He seemed to be near-sighted, and the frown was quite a harmless one.

"Yes, sir, that is my name."

I advanced, and without rising he requested me to take a chair. Supposing, probably, from my fashionable dress, and white hands, that I was some traveling concert giver, he settled his spectacles, and coolly waited for me to commence the conversation, doubtless anticipating that my errand was to request him to write a puff for a company of "inimitable Ethiopian Nightingales," or some celebrated prima donna just from the principal theatres of Europe, where her liberal Italian principles had rendered her an object of persecution to all the crowned heads, and finally compelled her to fly to the land of the free for protection, etc., etc.

Glancing around the shabby little room with an air of easy indifference, I seated myself. Knowing that preambles and prefatory remarks were generally voted bores, by editors of daily papers, especially, I at once launched at the subject.

"I learn from a friend of your paper, sir, that you have but one

editor engaged upon it, and as the labors of such a person must be very arduous ——"

"Very indeed, sir, you're right there," said the gentleman, interrupting me.

"As I suppose the duties must be very laborious," I continued "I have called to inquire, sir, if you do not wish to engage an assistant editor."

Pausing, I contemplated Mr. Blackly's spectacles, and waited for his answer.

"Have you ever been engaged upon a daily paper, sir?" asked he somewhat pompously, "and are you aware of the duties, responsibilities and honors of such an important position?"

"I have contributed to several of the eastern magazines, and have written occasionally for the Cincinnati and Louisville newspapers, but have never been actually engaged as editor."

"Ah," ejaculated Mr. Blackly, picking his teeth with the end of his pen, "so you are a contributor to 'Gunter,' I presume, a very ably conducted magazine indeed—we exchange with it."

I bowed, and the editor continued.

"As to engaging an assistant, I really don't exactly know what to think of it. I have had a great many applications, sir, and without a person was a smooth, rapid writer, and agreed with me in politics, I do not apprehend, sir, that we could get along very well together. What are your political opinions, if I may inquire, sir?"

Informing him, he nodded assent, and observed,

"All right. Can you write a good political article?"

"I dare say I could, sir, almost any one can do that, in the style such things are generally done up now-a-days."

Mr. Blackly rubbed his nose softly with his thumb, and forefinger.

"Well—suppose you call here again to-morrow. I'll study about it to-night, and we will talk the subject over more leisurely in the morning."

"Very well, sir," replied I, extending him my card, "I will call then at ——"

"Eleven o'clock, if you please," interrupted Mr. Blackly, finishing the sentence for me.

At ten minutes past the hour—for I did not wish to be too punctual, for fear he should think that I was over-anxious to get the place, I walked again into the editorial sanctum.

Mr. Blackly was reading his exchanges. Removing his spectacles and wiping them with a red, greasy-looking handkerchief, he laid down his paper, and nodded to me familiarly.

"Fine morning, sir,"

"Delightful," answered I, taking a chair which he waved me to.

"I have been pondering over the matter upon which you spoke to me yesterday, Mr. ——." Leaning forward, he took up my card from the table. "Poor hand to remember names, Mr. Trevor—as I was saying, I have been thinking over this business, and if we can come to satisfactory terms as to the compensation which you may require, I am of the opinion that I may possibly like to engage your services—at least for a time, any way. Pray what salary would you expect?"

"Well, I hardly know," replied I, modestly, "but would rather leave it to you to make the proposition."

Mr. Blackly looked slightly disconcerted.

"Will forty dollars a month be enough, do you think?" he hazarded.

"I am willing to accept that, sir, for the first month or two, until we find how well we can agree."

He laughed slily.

"When shall I commence with you, sir?"

"To-morrow, if you wish."

Leaving the office, I slowly returned to my lodgings. I scarcely knew whether to rejoice over my good fortune or to feel embarrassed at the responsibilities which I had shouldered, and to shrink from the task. Knowing no more about editing a paper than the man in the

moon, (it is generally supposed, I believe, that they have no newspapers there) it was natural that I should feel somewhat nervous, when I came calmly to contemplate my position. Forty dollars a month was more than I had expected, and as three dollars and a half a week covered my expenses for boarding and lodging, in the best boarding house of the place, I began to calculate what could be expended for dress, and how much I could then save. As society was not to be courted or its pleasures greatly indulged in, I might, by strict economy, lay aside a small amount each month. This should go to my mother.

Upon the next morning I commenced my duties. Mr. Blackly did not allow me to do much, as he had to give me instructions as to what I was expected to attend to, and assign me a particular department.

He asked me if I could not furnish him with a new story, as he wished to astonish his cotemporaries by publishing something "really good and original." Having a sketch with me, which one of my Philadelphia friends of the fraternity had rejected, assigning no better reason than the obscurity and unknown name of the writer, I at once placed this in Mr. Blackly's hands.

He read it—wondered—was delighted, and inquired if it "really and candidly was all original?"

"Why, assuredly, sir, you do not mean to imply that I have plagiarized from any one?"

"Certainly not, Mr. Trevor, but then it is so much superior to what I had anticipated, that I could scarcely believe you wrote it all—without assistance."

Looking at him curiously and inspectingly, to see if he was speaking ironically, and then satisfied from the scrutiny that he was not, I formed a very high estimate of the gentleman's appreciative qualities.

Two weeks had passed, and I was slowly becoming initiated into the "duties and responsibilities of the editorial office." Mr. Blackly came to me about this time, and told me that he was compelled to be

absent from the city upon important professional business, and that he would doubtless be gone for two or three days—"did Mr. Trevor think he could manage the paper during his absence?"

Mr. Trevor was vain enough to suppose that he could, as he had found nothing, as yet, so very laborious or brain-taxing, except the constant confinement, and even this he was beginning to get habituated to, for people will become accustomed to almost anything, save, perhaps, starvation.

"Be very cautious if you write a political article, Mr. Trevor, so as not to commit the paper to any fixed line of policy; parties are in a very chaotic state at present. The old Whig organization, broken up, as you are aware—the Democrats fomented by factions into intestine strife, and the Free-soilers hardly knowing what soil they stand on. Then this new order of the day, very mysterious, by-the-bye, which seems about to absorb all factions, and, like the rod of Moses, swallows up all the others.—You remember reading that part of the Bible, I presume, Mr. Trevor?"

"O, yes, sir. So it will be my best course to steer carefully among all, and not give offence to any?"

"Just so, Mr. Trevor, I perceive that you understand the wire-pulling. It is like sailing in a skiff through a river, where a great many people are drowning. You must be cautious and wary, and steer so as not to let any one of them get into the boat, but yet, at the same time, refrain from knocking any one on the head with this little feathered oar, (Mr. Blackly held up a pen and twirled it proudly in his fingers.) And if they do go down, nobody is to blame—you understand. Good morning, Mr. Trevor, I shall return day after to-morrow."

"Good morning, Mr. Blackly—I wish you a pleasant journey."

And I was alone. Busying myself among the pile of exchanges, and using my scissors freely, I very soon succeeded in filling the columns usually allotted to selections and anecdotes, poetry, etc., and then stretched my arm aloft, waved my goose-quill triumphantly, and descended upon the pure, innocent, lamb-like paper as a golden eagle from his aerie pounces upon his prey.

I soon dashed off a leader, which *I* thought admirable, but then I was, no doubt, partial to my own progeny. Taking the "senior's" advice, I had carefully steered clear of all extremes. I had patted the sinking parties all on the head, but kept them at a safe distance —none had I offended, and thus far all well, but I could not resist the temptation to make some remarks upon a speech which had been franked to the editor from a member of Congress, and exhausted my invective and irony upon it, and the private character of the speaker. Sinking back, perspiring freely after the effort, I happened to espy a copy of "Poems," just published by a verse-writing clergyman of the city, which had been sent in to receive the usual quantity of fulsome, ridiculous puffing, and unmeaning bombastic criticism. A city daily had led off in a *critique* be-slavering the book with praises, and showing about as much discrimination and lack of independence as can well be imagined. Provoked at the editor's sycophancy, I wrote a burlesque "book notice," and heading it as follows, it appeared next morning in the *Freeman*.

I still preserve it as a literary curiosity of my editorial days, and have often laughed at the remembrance of the adventure it was the cause of my getting into.

"'*A Model Critique.*—We transcribe the following acute poetical analysis from a respected contemporary.

"'*Our Book Notices.*—Poems.—By Rev. John Smith, M. A. P. B., of Indianapolis. 122 pages, octavo. Bound in calf, and illustrated. Gull & Hoax, Publishers for the author.

"'This sumptuously printed and magnificently illustrated volume, which has been lying upon our table for several days past, we now embrace this opportune occasion of examining with the care and profound attention which its high excellence merits at our hands. Glancing leisurely through its pages, we have been impressed with feelings of astonishment, that one we listen to every Sabbath, (except when we are absent) should have produced such a wonderful collection of poems. Among the many sparkling gems with which its elaborate sides are dazzlingly encrusted, we may select the subjoined

for our highest commendation. (We beg leave to enunciate in this parenthesis that this gem is selected altogether and entirely at random.) Here it is, we beg our readers to examine it attentively.

"Ho, the jolly miller that stands in the mill,
The mill goes round—and the miller stands still."

"'Now, it will be seen at a glance, that these lines, in the rectangular style of diometric dactyls, are almost bursting with poetic and ennobling sentiment of the very highest order. For instance, what a picture of serene poetical repose this truly original and beautiful sentiment, so chastely and classically expressed, produces upon the heart of the unsophisticated reader. Our patrons will not fail to perceive that the poet superbly expresses and typifies an emotion of grand and overpowering dignity is this passage—"The mill goes round!" This is an emblem of the eternal wear and tear of the universe! Overpowering thought!

"'But mark what follows subsequently after—"The miller stands still!!!" Could anything be more soul-percussing in the preponderant immensity of didosity? It is the omnipotent petrefaction of the sublime ideal of stillness—it is the quintessence of peace. Could the whole Union, or indeed the entire State of Indiana—great and free country, as it is, furnish, to order, a more elaborately finished daguerreotype of the element of quietness, which *we* hold to be so inordinately essential to good and *true* poetry? We fearlessly promulgate this interrogatory, without the slightest fear of contradiction. Our natural and inborn poetic sentiment teaches us the universal uniformity of the power of genius. But we must curtail our space by regretting that a crowd of other voluminous matter has unavoidably intruded into the column usually appropriated to our book reviews, and we are, consequently, under the painful necessity of bringing our critical remarks to a period. We would, by the way, inform our numerous readers that we will endeavor to resume the absorbing theme in our next issue—for we cannot help believing (an internal presentiment assures us) that we

have a great poet among us. One that is destined, in this degenerate, utilitarian age of the nineteenth century, to produce a poem that shall survive the shocks of ages and the crash of worlds! Our feelings at this moment overwhelm us in a shower of extatic and sublime emotions. We *must* desist.'"

The leader and the *critique* were sent to press, and appeared in the next morning's issue, and, as I afterwards heard, excited no little attention and remark among newspaper readers in the city. It was supposed that Mr. Blackly, himself, had written them, as I had been in the place little more than two weeks, and as yet had made very few acquaintances.

CHAPTER LVI.

The day after publication, as I was sitting at the desk in the editorial sanctum, with my pen poised in my fingers, and just in the act of writing, I was startled by the abrupt entrance of Mr. Blackly. I looked up, intending to congratulate him upon the earliness of his arrival, but perceiving the expression of his countenance, my lips refused to utter a word, for the astonishment which sealed them.

"Mr. Trevor, I am amazed! paralyzed with wonder, sir!" ejaculated the gentleman, gasping for breath as though he had been running a race.

"Ah, sir, what has occasioned it?" asked I coolly, wheeling my chair around and facing the surprised, indignant editor.

"Do you add insult to injury, sir, after all that you have done in my absence?"

"*I*, Mr. Blackly—explain yourself, I beg of you—let me hear of what I am accused."

He walked back and forth in the room like a wild beast in a cage, muttering to himself at intervals, and clenching his hands, while upon his brow gathered an ominous frown. "Ruined forever—never recover from it—never in the world!"

"What is it, can't you tell me, sir?" said I innocently.

Approaching me, he drew from his pocket a soiled and torn copy of the *Daily Freeman*, and holding it out at arm's length in his left hand, as a child would hold a dead snake upon a stick, pointed with his right hand to the 'leader.' Forcing his teeth together to recover his self-command, as I sat calmly in my chair and absently toyed with a pen, he burst forth:

" I was coming down in the cars to the city this afternoon, sir, and as a gentleman got up and left his seat, sir, he dropped this paper upon it. I had not seen to-day's issue, sir, and I took it up to examine the contents. Reading your leader, sir, what was my amazement, my indignation, to see the Honorable Lycurgus Cæsar Scrogg's eloquent speech upon the exciting bill now before Congress, reviewed in the most savage and malignant manner—his character arraigned and vilified—his pure and patriotic motives traduced, and all the invective and sarcasm of a malicious personal enemy, heaped upon him, and this, too, published in my paper, and the one my dearest, best friends and the cousin of my wife."

Mr. Blackly paused for breath. I uttered not a word, for I now fully comprehended what had been done.

"But I am not yet through, sir," continued the excited individual, gathering his indignation afresh to heap upon me.

" Proceed, sir," exclaimed I, haughtily rising from my chair.

" As I was coming up the street, sir, from the depôt, I chanced to meet the Rev. John Smith, my father's uncle, one of the most talented divines of the city, and permit me to say, sir, notwithstanding your opinion, a poet of high excellency. I bowed and spoke. He bestowed upon me a glance of withering contempt, and brushed past me in silence. Horrified and amazed, I again turned to the paper, thinking, perhaps, that I would find an explanation, and what do I encounter, sir, but this—this infernal criticism which you have written off in order to show your imperial disdain for the superior judgment of another critic. It is unjust, insulting, disgraceful, abominable, detestable, abhorrent ——"

" Be cautious, Mr. Blackly, you will exhaust your slender stock of adjectives. I am exceedingly sorry to learn that you do not like that *critique*. Allow me to assure you that it does the Reverend gentleman's poetical abilities full justice, and, sir, I shall not retract one word of it."

"Sir ! Mr. Trevor, sir !" shouted he, losing all command of him-

self, and foaming at the mouth with rage at my language, and coolness.

"As to the political article," continued I, "the relationship between you and the member of Congress, was not known to me, but how you can endorse such sentiments as that speech contains, is a marvel to a man of sense and independence."

"Did I say that I endorsed his sentiments—did I say it, you ——"

"But dare to lay your hands on me, sir," and I looked him calmly in the eyes as he approached in a menacing attitude.

"I'd just like to pitch you out of the window."

"Better try it, Mr. Blackly," observed I, folding my arms with provoking *sang froid*, and placing myself in an attitude.

The editor regarded me with a frown of intense malignity, blended with fear, and scowling like a thunder cloud, again commenced to pace the floor.

"I don't endorse or approve of the sentiments of the Hon. Mr. Scroggs' speech, but there is such a thing as silence, sir, when praise cannot be awarded, and had I been here I would not have mentioned the subject at all, sir. As to the book notice, or *critique*, as you call it ——"

"Well," interrupted I, as he halted for a word.

"Well, sir, it is certainly the greatest piece of bombast, fanfaronade and fustian I ever read, and I am really ashamed that it should have appeared in the *Freeman*, for, aside from its gross impropriety and personality, it is utterly contemptible as a piece of literary composition."

"That is just what I intended it to be, Mr. Blackly. You have commended it most highly."

"To think that any one should have the impudence to treat the poetical effusions of a minister of the gospel in this manner—it is grossly outrageous!"

"What did he publish his trash for?"

"*Trash!* Do you call those poems trash, sir? You do not know what good poetry is. You cannot appreciate the real excellence of pure, patriotic, Western literature. That ode addressed to the 'Wandering Crow,' sir, is far superior to Poe's 'Raven;' and the refrain of 'Nevermore' is *not* a plagiarism—that word, sir, belongs to the English language, and one poet has just as much right to it as another, sir."

"Will you oblige me by drawing off my bill, Mr. Blackly. After what has passed, I perceive that we cannot work well together."

"Your bill, Mr. Trevor?"

"My bill, Mr. Blackly."

"Very well, sir, it shall be done. I regret to lose you, and think, perhaps, the difficulty may yet be settled, if you will only write out an apologetic explanation of the affair, and publish it in to-morrow's paper."

"I shall do no such thing, sir. Do you mean to insult me?"

"Then, Mr. Trevor, I shall do it for you, and say that both articles were published without either my knowledge or consent."

"*You* can do as you please, sir; but I warn you not to reflect too severely upon me, or you may receive a reply."

"Do not fear, Mr. Trevor; I shall do you and your abilities full justice," answered Blackly, ironically, twirling his spectacles.

"I will call in the morning, sir, and hope you will have our business matters all arranged."

He bowed.

"I took my hat, and drawing a pair of kid gloves from my pocket, put them on very leisurely, as the editor sat down in the chair I had just vacated, and commenced rummaging among the papers and exchanges.

"We part as friends, I presume, Mr. Trevor?" said Blackly, in a conciliating tone, rising from his seat as I made a step towards the doorway. "Will you shake hands before we separate?"

"'The hand of Douglass is his own!'" quoted I with haughtiness, bowing slightly, and turning upon my heel as I left the office.

Mr. Blackly gazed, with his eyes expanded in wondering amazement, then muttering something that sounded very much like an oath, angrily resumed his seat.

"And thus ends my career as an editor, just when I am beginning to feel its 'honors and responsibilities,'" murmured I, walking slowly and abstractedly to my lodgings. "I am afraid I was too hasty, and have lost a good place by my uncompromising pride and haughtiness. Well, it is too late now for regrets, for I shall never return to ask pardon or forgiveness."

Now came the recollection of the letter of introduction, which I had brought to a gentleman of the city, from Mr. Willis. It had been lying in the bottom of my trunk ever since I had received it, and upon reaching my room, I furbished it up, and called the next day at his place of business. The individual to whom it was addressed was called Mr. Brown, and his personal appearance was about as common as his name. He read the epistle very carefully, and then lazily looked up.

"So you are Mr. Trevor? Won't you take a seat, sir?"

I bowed and sat down.

"And so you have come out here to get into business, eh? Very dull time just now—trade slack.—How is Mr. Willis?"

"He was in good health, sir, when I left Kentucky."

"Been in the dry goods business before, eh, Mr. Trevor? Nice business—very. How d'ye like our State, compared with Kentucky?"

"I am very much pleased with it, Mr. Brown. Pray, what is the population of your city?"

"Population of the city, eh? Well, it's about fifteen or sixteen thousand—growing monstrously, though—soon be as large as New York, sir. You seem astonished, Mr. Trevor, but it's a fact. Why, sir, how many railroads do you suppose we have centering here?"

"I could not possibly imagine—three or four perhaps."

"By thunder! sir, we have seven—seven, sir, by heaven! You

see that's poetry too, and every year they are increasing. I tell you, Mr. Trevor, as sure as I am a living man, this little city is bound, 'in the course of human events'—as that immortal production, the Declaration of Independence, says—to be one of the greatest cities in the West, sir. Fact, undoubtedly; just look at our facilities—land productive, country rich, people industrious; what is to hinder Indiana from being one of the greatest, freest, richest States in the whole Union?"

"It seems to be in a very prosperous condition," said I, knowing that the gentleman expected me to make some reply, and not knowing what else to say.

"Very, indeed, sir. You must not think hard of me if I say that Kentucky is at least fifty years behind us in everything, Mr. Trevor."

"Ah!" ejaculated I, inquiringly.

"Yes," replied Mr. Brown, and then he entered into a long argument to prove it, by citing the reports of the Census Bureau and the agricultural publications of the Patent Office. Bored and worried by his dry statistics, I unconsciously began to yawn.

"But I perceive you are getting tired of this—haven't much taste for figures, I guess. Great science, Mr. Trevor," added he, patronizingly. "World couldn't get along without figures."

Not wishing to dispute this point with the gentleman, I allowed him to have it all his own way. I had had enough of "figures."

"Do you think I could succeed in getting into business here, Mr. Brown, if I should remain a week or two? The city pleases me exceedingly."

The question interrupted him, and scratching his head with his pen, he replied that he "judged that I could by waiting sometime. You see the fact of the case is this, Mr. Trevor—there are *so many* young men coming out West to get into business, that it is rather difficult to find a vacant situation. However, I am well acquainted with all the merchants here, and flatter myself—flatter myself I say, Mr. Trevor ——"

I bowed and smiled.

"That *I* can get you a place if any body in the city can. Mr. Willis was sensible in giving you a letter to me, because he is well aware of the position I hold in this community—well aware of it, Mr. Trevor."

"Mr. Willis informed me that you went to school together—at Lexington, I believe."

"Ah, yes, Mr. Trevor—remember it well. Willis and I used to room together, and many a fine spree we have had. Frequently went out chicken stealing together; you know chicken stealing among college boys is considered a gentlemanly accomplishment. One cloudy night Willis and myself started to go to a place about a mile from the college. After walking nearly up to the house, we halted to reconnoitre. The hen-roost was pretty near the family residence, and as there were dogs about the premises, it was necessary for us to be very cautious. Willis, it was agreed between us, was to climb up, and reaching to the roosting place, twist off the hens' necks, and then hand them down to me. All was still, but the night was very cloudy and dark. He succeeded in getting safely up after a great deal of trouble, and clutching an old hen by the neck, gave her a twist, and letting the head drop, down it came bill foremost and gave me a most cruel peck upon the nose. I uttered a deep 'damme'—used to swear then, but joined the church since.

"'Hush!' said Willis, and down tumbled the old hen, spirting her blood all over me.

"'Zounds! Frank, be more cautious.

"'Yes,' said he, 'look out!' and down he pitched another on top of my back, as I stooped to pick up the first one, and she spat blood, too, like a fellow with a galloping consumption. It ran down my neck, and stained my shirt as red as a beet. Tossing three or four more to me, (after this I kept my eye skinned,) Frank soon had as many as we could carry, and jumped to the ground. I could feel the old hen's blood trickling down my bare back, and moistening all my

shirt; and I tell you it made me squirm and twist as though I had fleas on me. Dogs began to bark like the dickens just as we gathered up the hens, chickens cackled, and the old red rooster crowed prodigiously.

"'It's all up with us now, Willis,' says I.

"'We'll never surrender, by George!' cried my friend.—'Here, Brown, you take all the chickens by the legs and crawl out at the door, then go around through the orchard, and I'll meet you under the big oak at the corner. Quick! quick! I hear some one coming.'

"'And where are you going?' says I.

"'To see if the coast's clear.'

"So I crawled out at the low door like a bug out of an augur hole, and broke off in a run. Frank got out after me, and moved away in a different direction. 'Twas as dark as a pile o' black cats, and drizzling rain by this time. I kept on, as Frank had told me, leaving him to take care of himself, for I had all the chickens, and a pretty good load they were, too. Presently I reached the big oak, and saw the figure of a man standing under it.

"'Halloo!' says I; 'that you, Willis?'

"Just then a gun fired not far off, and my friend made an impatient gesture to me to give him the chickens, and be silent. I handed them all over, one by one, wondering what in the deuce this was for, but thinking Frank was up to snuff, and 'twas all right. After I had given him all, he again motioned to me to stand still.

"'Why don't you speak?' says I. 'They can't hear a fellow whisper, I guess.'

"But he placed his finger on his lip, meaning, I suppose, for me to keep still, and then putting his thumb to his nose, and making his fingers revolve like a windmill,—as much as to say, 'ye can't come it over this hoss, mister,'—he walked slily off.

"'By the valley o' Jehosophat! what *does* this all mean? I can't understand it.'

"And there I stood under the big oak scratching my head, and

waiting for Frank to come back and explain. Suddenly I heard the dry leaves crackling, and some one appeared, running like the 'old Scratch' had been after him with a long pole.

"'Who's that?'

"'Me,' cries Frank, and up he came, panting like a race-horse. 'Come on, Brown, run like Tam O'Shanter's witches were after you,' gasped he, dashing past and running out towards town.

"Dogs barked, hens cackled, guns fired, and the way we did streak it, would have astonished any Ingin. We soon distanced them, however, and the sounds died away in the distance. They had given up the chase or lost our trail, and now we halted to get breath.

"'By Judas,' says Willis, 'they came near shooting me—why, how dark it is getting.'

"'Yes, dark enough to slice it up like cheese; let us be pushing on, for it's going to rain pitchforks, or I'm no judge of the clouds.'

"We trudged on again, so tired and worn out that we could scarcely drag our legs after us. The old hen's blood on my shirt had stuck to my back, and felt as tight as 'Poor man's plaster.'

"'Frank,' says I, 'ain't you tired carrying all the chickens? let me help you.'

"'All the chickens!' repeats he, in the accent of a man that had just heard of the loss of his last friend.

"'Yes, you know I gave them to you under the big oak, and you went off and put your finger to your nose.'

"'Thunder and lightning!' screams Willis, dancing with vexation, 'that was not me—it must have been the owner of them, for, I dare say, he overheard us.'

"'Dad drat it,' muttered I, 'what a couple of jackasses we have been.'"

I laughed heartily at the picture of my quiet brother-in-law being engaged in such a scrape.

"You may fancy our feelings," added Mr. Brown, "for, as the novelist's say, "they may be imagined, but not adequately described."

"There are the daily papers on the desk, Mr. Trevor, amuse yourself while I go out and make some inquiries in relation to your business. I'll do my best to get you a good situation here."

Thanking him cordially, he left me.

"There is nothing like laughing at a man's jokes after all," said I, taking up a copy of the *Daily Freeman* and glancing inquiringly over it.

Mr. Blackly had fulfilled his threat, and came out in the present number with a most supplicating apology for the obnoxious articles. He informed his readers, that during a short absence from the city he had left the paper in charge of a young gentleman with whom he was but slightly acquainted, and that the never-to-be-sufficiently-censured article had been written by him, and inserted without the knowledge or consent of the senior editor. He hoped, "sincerely hoped, that the intelligent and well-informed readers of the Daily Freeman would pardon the circumstance." It would never occur again, Mr. Blackly assured his patrons, for the young gentleman had now left the office, and had no further connection with the newspaper. He cringingly apologized to the Honorable Lycurges Cæsar Scroggs, for the personal insult I had offered him, and begged pardon, with obsequious servility, of the Rev. John Smith, for the notice of his "Poems."

"Very good, Mr. Blackly—excellent, Mr. Blackly—you may pass."

I laid the paper upon the desk as Mr. Brown returned. He took a seat and wiped the perspiration from his face, for Mr. Brown was naturally somewhat corpulent and short-winded.

"Well, Mr. Trevor, I have been around to see several of our merchants, and find that all of them have as many clerks as they want, except one firm, and I do not suppose that you would like them, as they do a mixed, country trade—are very particular, and not at all popular."

"What is the name of the firm, Mr. Brown?"

"A. & J. B. S. Hobbins.—You might call and see them, and if

you are pleased with their appearance, take the situation temporarily, until I can find something better for you."

"I am extremely obliged to you, Mr. Brown, for taking so much trouble—"

"No trouble at all, to favor such a gentleman as you. I can tell you plainly beforehand, however, that I do not think you will like the place."

"I will go at once and see, for fear some one else applies before me. Good morning Mr. Brown."

"Good morning, Mr. Trevor. Call in again and see me."

CHAPTER LVII.

ARRIVING at the store, over which, in large capitals, sprawled the name of A. & J. B. S. Hobbins, I entered. The room was low and dark, and had a smoked, dingy appearance. Bolts of red and yellow flannels, linseys and other coarse woollen goods were heaped up near the door, and served to render the place still dimmer, by excluding the light from the small-paned windows. A counter extended along one side of the room, and upon the other, a table with a "rack" or frame upon it, covered with coats, pantaloons and other articles, of ready-made clothing. In the centre of the space, between the table and the counter, stood an antiquated stove, covered with reddish-brown rust, and from the ceiling depended a long strip of fly-specked, dirty calico, to which were pinned red comforters and blue and orange plaid cravats. The appearance was not very prepossessing, and I mentally decided not to apply for the situation, but to purchase a paper of pins or some other small article, and not disclose the object of my visit. To think of living in such a place was past endurance. But then if I rejected the only offer I could expect to receive, what else was there to hope for? At present there was scarcely money enough left in my purse to pay my traveling expenses back to Kentucky; and to return there again, I could not—*would* not do it.

"Is Mr. Hobbins in?" I asked of a rather good-looking young clerk, who came forward from the dim obscurity at my entrance.

"Which one, sir, do you want to see? there are two Mr. Hobbinses."

"Either of them—it's of no consequence."

"Mr. Jake Hobbins!" called he to a man at the other extremity

of the room, with his foot supported upon a nail-keg, blacking his boots vigorously.

"Hello," exclaimed the individual addressed, "all right—what is it?"

"Man here wants to see you."

Now, I was elegantly, and even fashionably dressed, and to have an impudent counter-hopper speak of me as a "man," instead of using the polite expression of "gentleman," made me feel indignant. It was a very small matter, but then I was in no mood to bear such a thing.

"If that is the gentleman," said I, "you need not call him—I will go to him."

The real secret was, I did not wish to state my business before any one, as my morbid pride and sensitiveness rather shrunk from the abasement of asking any man to employ *me*—to give *me* work. Mr. Hobbins, a man with a sinister-looking eye, a thick nose, very strange upper lip, and bushy, black beard, advanced towards me, and with an impudent stare, asked me if I wanted to speak with him. His manner was abrupt, almost to rudeness, and it was with an effort that I recovered my self-possession, already severely taxed by the clerk's impertinence, and assuming a manner of easy indifference, replied to him. Biting off his finger-nails, which I noticed were very filthy, and leaning back against a bale of brown cottons, he crossed his legs and favored me with another rude stare, as I commenced speaking.

"Mr. Brown informed me, sir, that you wished to employ a book-keeper, and as I am at present out of business, I have called to see if you have succeeded in filling the vacancy."

"Haven't yet, Mister—do you live in the city?"

"I have been here a few weeks, but am by birth a Kentuckian."

"Kentuckian, eh? Young men from that State, generally have too high notions for our use—you see we don't have any niggers here"

"Ah!" exclaimed I, haughtily, "I was aware of that, sir."

My *hauteur* seemed to render him somewhat more respectful, and he continued.

"Our book-keeper is about to leave us, and we have not yet supplied his place—expect, may be you might suit us—ever kept books before?—write a good hand?"

"My hand-writing has been pronounced very neat," replied I coolly.

"Yes—I know—all right—very well—'spose you come up stairs and we'll see about it."

He walked towards the front of the room with a nervous, limping gait, as though his feet were deformed.

"Counting-room cleared up, Dunk?" demanded he, in a harsh, imperious tone, of the clerk who had spoken to me at my entrance.

"Yes, sir, all right."

I followed him up stairs, and passing through a large, dirty room, filled with old boots, soleless and in their dotage—hats, which once had been new, but alas, now were "most shocking bad," and old, dilapidated stools and chairs, with shaky, rheumatic legs—we reached a little crib of a place partitioned off from one corner of the large apartment, and dignified by the title of "counting room." Hobbins, pulling out the drawer of the table, or desk, with a restless, nervous movement, spread a sheet of paper before me. He seemed to do everything with a jerk, as though life were too short for the transaction of all the important business he had to attend to.

"Take a chair if you please," said he, "and let's see a specimen of your writing."

Seating myself, and dipping the pen leisurely in the ink, I scribbled off three or four lines.

"The ink is rather thin, or I could write better than this."

"Why, that is excellent—first rate, sir. I always like to see a book keeper write a good legible hand, because it's so much easier to read, and then always prevents mistakes and difficulties."

I agreed with the gentleman in this particular—*I* also liked to see a book-keeper write legibly.

"Here is some of our former young man's writing,' said Mr. Hobbins, taking several journals out of a large iron safe, and dashing them down upon the table with vehemence.

Thinking something must have gone wrong, and irritated him, I looked up with an expression of surprise, but saw that the gentleman was in his usual mood, and this was only an emphatic habit he had acquired. Turning over the leaves with nervous haste, and scarcely allowing me sufficient time to examine the writing, he asked—"Think he writes as well as you?—pretty good, but nothing extra. I think your style of penmanship much the best."

And he closed the books with a dash and threw them into the safe.

"What is you name? Mister—— Trevor, eh? very good name—spell it T-r-e v-o-r, do you? always like to know how a name is spelled, and then I remember it so much better. Nice place this little counting room, so retired and quiet."

As Mr. Hobbins made the remark, I surveyed the little box, lighted by one window, curtained with spider webs and dust. A small, rusty stove about the size of a large coffee pot, occupied the center of the floor, and two or three old iron-clamped chests were ranged near the walls; two persons were as many as the place would contain at once, and then it seemed as though one of them, if he wished to turn round, would have to go out to perform the operation.

"Nice little place, very indeed—all right," ejaculated my companion, watching me closely as I glanced around.

I bowed and elevated my eyebrows.

"What salary do you purpose paying a book-keeper, Mister——?" (I affected to forget his name, and drawled out the word with a languid fatigue.)

"Hobbins," interposed the gentleman, filling the vacancy—Jacob Benjamin Short Hobbins, rather a long name, but yet there is something short about it—and he laughed tumultuously at his own poor witticism.

I smiled, not at Mr. Hobbins' wit, but at his name.

"Ha! ha! ha! you see my grand-daddy gave me that name. Queer old cock, *he* was—came very near being elected governor of the State once. Great man—fought in the Injin wars and killed lots of the red skins—Gen. Hobbins was one of 'em, I tell ye."

"Ah!" exclaimed I, prolonging the emphasis into a resounding echo, and looking at Mr. Hobbins in admiring surprise.

"Yes, but about the salary, as you asked me. We will give a good book-keeper, such as I think you are—two hundred dollars a year and board him. That's very liberal now, you know, and I make bold to say, more than any other house in town pays. We have always had the best quality of young men—the very first class. Forgot to say, however, that when the book-keeper ain't engaged on the books, we always expect him to help us to sell goods, and fix up the things down below."

Mr. Hobbins stared as though he was astonished at my folly in failing to appreciate the largeness of his liberality.

"Well—you can inquire of Mr. Brown in relation to my character and qualifications," rejoined I, not wishing to refuse the offer, and yet, loth to accept it until after due consideration.

"All right—very well, Mr. Trevor."

"And I'll call again to-morrow, perhaps, and we can then make some arrangement."

I had reached the door-way, and stood waiting for Mr. Hobbins to accompany me down stairs.

"Splendid room this, for goods," said he as we walked through the large, dusty apartment in front. "Rather dirty now, but have it all cleaned up in a few days." And then he continued praising everything about the house, speaking in a loud, ear-torturing brassy voice, and making as many awkward gestures with his hands and arms, as a hungry monkey. I listened with an effort at patience, and replied usually in monasyllables. Descending the staircase, we halted in the lower room, near the front door. The young clerk whom Hobbins had called Dunk, was waiting upon a large-boned female Hibernian enveloped in an extensive blanket shawl.

"Give ye tin cints a yard fur it, and that's more nor it's worth."

"Can't sell it for no sich price, mum, just what it cost us in Philadelphy. Take it at twelve-and-a-half cents—if you don't you can let it alone."

"D. U. S. M.—L. H., Dunk," repeated Hobbins, looking over his shoulder and braying at the clerk.

"P. B.," replied he, shrugging his shoulders and yawning.

Observing my surprise at hearing these cabalistic letters pronounced so mysteriously, Mr. Hobbins winked his left eye and assumed an acute look, made up of a mosaic of cunning, self-complacency, and wisdom.

"Telegraphic way I have of communicating with my clerks," added he, drawing near to me and speaking in a whisper, as I watched the Irish woman.

"Don't ye be afther spittin' out yer Hoosier lingo at me—I'm smart enough for ye, if I am from the ould counthry."

"Take this calico at twelve-and-a-half a yard?" asked the clerk twirling the yard stick impatiently.

"No—ye'll be sure to chate me, fur it'll fade."

"Well, just leave the house then—don't wan't any paddies about here," interrupted Hobbins, speaking excitedly, and walking towards the woman.

"That *I* will in a jiffy—ye dirty blackguard. Ye don't know how to trate dacent ladies in this counthry—O that I was back to swate Ireland—cut that off for tin cints, I'll take it."

"No, no, won't do it—go on."

The Irish woman reluctantly moved off, and Dunk folded the calico and placed it back in the shelf.

"Darned ignoramus," muttered the young gentleman, condescendingly, "thinks we ain't got any sense here, I guess."

"The Irish are a great nuisance, Mr. Trevor, never sell 'em anything—wish they would all get drowned in the Atlantic before they land here." Mr. Hobbins smiled grimly, and looked ferocious as he rubbed up his whiskers.

Laughing slily at the absurdity of the remark, Hobbins thinking that I appreciated the wit of it, laughed too.

"Well, I'll call again, Mr. Hobbins—good morning, sir."

"All right you know, all right—good morning," said the gentleman in a jerking, metalic tone, plunging his hand diabolically into his shirt bosom.

"And can I live in such a place as that, and drudge away the brightest, best years of my existence, for a pitiful two hundred dollars a year? Could the aristocratic, high born Sir Charles Crawford whose son I might have been—or the fashionable, fastidious Mrs. Derby, who petted and loved me—could they only see me now, what, what would they say?"

I strolled sadly along the street.

"Zounds, Mr. Trevor, came near causing a collision—been dreaming have you?" exclaimed Mr. Brown, halting suddenly as I looked up and encountered him.

"Beg pardon," rejoined I, "'twould have been a serious affair to run against you, Mr. Brown—the offender would never recover from the shock."

"Ha! ha! great many of the flesh pots of Egypt buried in here,"—and Mr. Brown patted his corpulent paunch self-complacently.

"Been to see the Hobbinses have you? ah, you must call at the store and go up to tea with me this evening—in a great hurry now—just going to the bank—good morning."

Accepting the invitation, Mr. Brown hurried away, and turning into the street upon which my boarding house was situated, I soon entered my own room.

I threw myself languidly upon the bed, puzzled and undecided what course to pursue in relation to Hobbins and his proposition. If I rejected it in the vain expectancy of getting a better offer, I might wait weeks, perchance, before such a thing occurred.

Tossing wildly, I dashed the pillow from me, and buried my face in the bed clothes. "Why did not I beg, pray, entreat my mother

to marry Sir Charles Crawford? Could she have endured all the humiliations and debasements of spirit that I have? To look back upon all I have lost, and forward to all I must yet encounter and endure—ah! the future is a lone, dreary sea, better to sink and drown than buffet amid its waves."

"Accident or chance, which I dare say are only synonymous terms for Providence, shall decide for me whether to accept this offer or to reject it, and trust to the future." I took up a book which lay upon the table, and read the title: it was the Bible. Resolving to be governed entirely in my conduct by the favorable or adverse meaning of the passage which should open to me, I closed my eyes, and deliberating a moment, opened the volume, and placing my finger upon a passage, bent earnestly forward to read it.—"And when his substance was all wasted, he hired himself to a citizen of that country to feed swine."

I did not read any more, but sat calmly, quietly down. The situation should be accepted. I would call upon the Messrs. Hobbins, and inform them that I would "hire" myself to them as bookkeeper, and I straightway commenced to dress, for I was to take tea at Mr. Brown's.

CHAPTER LVIII.

"ALL right—very well—I am glad to hear it. When will you commence with us?" said Mr. Hobbins, junior, as I stopped at his store the next day, and informed him that I had concluded to accept the place.

"It will be more convenient for me to begin to-morrow," I replied in answer to his question.

"Very well,—we'll expect you." And he turned abruptly and went off to the back part of the room to see if Dunk—who appeared to be engaged in weighing tea, and tying it up in papers—was attending strictly to his business. Turning sadly, yet indignantly, I left the house. This was only the beginning of what I might expect in such a place.

Punctually, the next day, I went to the store.

"You are a late riser, ain't you, Mr. ——? I forget your name."

"It just struck seven o'clock, I believe, sir."

"Well, *that's* late. We always get up here at day light, and have the store all open, and the goods out at the doors before breakfast."

"I will try and be here sooner, hereafter," replied I, repressing by an effort, my indignation and pride. Having paid my bill at my boarding house before starting, I found that there were two dollars and seventy-five cents left in my purse. A man with this amount must learn to command his temper, and endure what he dare not resent, for fear of taking the bread out of his own mouth.

"Just look around and make yourself acquainted with the goods, Mr. Trevor," said Hobbins, in an authoritative tone, "our old book-keeper won't leave for a day or two, and then you can take the books. He's drawing off accounts now."

"Yes, sir," I answered, as Mr. Hobbins swaggered with a droll

attempt at dignity, towards the front door. He seemed to be highly elated at having such a personage as myself in his employ. If any one should inquire who that handsome, fashionably-dressed fellow was, Mr. Hobbins could say, as he swelled out his puny hollow chest, and settled himself on his "game leg," "That young man, sir, is my book-kéeper—I always aim, sir, to have first class young men in my employ."

Walking back, I removed my hat, for the day was warm, and placing it upon the counter, surveyed the establishment. It seemed to contain a specimen of almost everything, and not much of anything after all. A row of pea green boxes, with little white labels upon them, three shelves of dingy, cheap calicos, rolls of satinetts and coarse cassimeres, red flannels, balls of candlewick, and I have forgotten what else, for turning away with a sickening sensation of disgust, I felt so hopeless and utterly oppressed with despondency, that, had I been alone, tears of vexation and resentment would have started to my eyes.

"Ever been in a store before?" asked Dunk, in a slightly patronising tone—for Hobbins had left the door, and gone up street, now, and he could take sufficient time to converse with me.

"Sir," said I, staring at him with annihilating contempt. He did not repeat the question after this rebuff, and going leisurely towards a heap of calicos upon the end of the counter, I drew one of the pieces out and examined the texture with my thumb and finger.

"Nice goods," observed Dunk, walking up. "Here's our cost mark. Did Mr. Hobbins—or Jake, as we always call him, because there's two of 'em—did he tell you the cost mark?"

"No, he did not—is this it?" and I took hold of a small piece of red paper attached to the goods.

"Yes," replied the clerk, with respectful politeness, "the letters are Black Hawke." B, you see, stands for one—L for two—A for there, and so on—very easily learned after a fellow once gets used to it."

"Ah, I suppose it is And you mark the cost of the goods in letters, do you, so that you may know the exact price, when you are dealing with a buyer?"

"Certainly, haven't you always been used to such things?"

"It is the custom in all retail trades, I believe, but I did not make an engagement to *sell goods.* I came here to keep the books."

"That's nothing—for here they expect a book-keeper to attend to all the accounts, and sell as many goods as the rest of us, besides. That's the way our other book-keeper did, and it ain't nothing more than right, because he got more wages than I did."

"There is a customer," remarked I, for Mr. Dunk was so busily engaged in enlightening me as to my duties, that he had not seen the lady that entered. Running his fingers through his hair, and running forward at the same time, he begged to know what the lady would look at.

"White Florence silk?—no, we havn't such an article in the house, madam. Is there nothing else to-day?" he added, smoothing his shirt collar, and attempting an accommodating smile. "White sewing silk, did you say? yes, I think we have some left." Hastily taking down a box from the shelf labeled "sewing silk," but which sounded rather sepulchrally hollow, Mr. Dunk removed the cover with a graceful curvelinear motion of the arm, and looked in. "Very sorry indeed, ma'm—entirely out of the article—guess Mr. Hobbins sold the last skein to-day."

The lady shrugged her shoulders and smiled ironically. "Well, what then have you, sir?"

"O, we've got a little of almost everything else," responded the obliging Mr. Dunk, bowing over the counter.

"I do not believe I want any to-day," murmured the lady, laughing and gliding quietly out.

"Morning, Misses Collinsworth—how de do, come in, ma'am," cried a loud, vulgar voice at the door. I looked up from the bolt of calico, where I had been examining a wood cut representing "Chatsworth," the celebrated residence of the Duke of Devonshire.

The cut was rude, and was pasted upon the calico as a mark to denote its English origin. Strange it certainly was, but that engraving which conveyed some faint idea of the splendors of the palatial mansion, at once recalled to me all the descriptions I had read, and the dreams I had indulged in of visiting it when I should go to England. A few weeks before, when breakfasting with Sir Charles Crawford, in Philadelphia, I might have confidently hoped to see these dreams of the Beautiful, realized—but *now*, perhaps, never.

* * * * * * *

THE store was closed about half-past eight o'clock in the evening, and Dunk, after fastening the shutters, came up to where I was, and took a seat upon the counter.

" Well, the work is over at last, and I guess I'm glad of it.—I'd as lief be a drayman as an over-worked, half-paid dry-good's clerk, for a drayman can have some independence and say what he pleases, and if he gets tired, sit down sometimes, but we *cannot*."

Dunk finished by a strong emphasis upon the last word, and brought his hand down upon the counter vehemently.

I started.

" You say there is nothing more to do, Mr. Dunk ?"

" Nothing more till morning, and then—"

" O, do not tell me of to-morrow. One such day as this is sufficient. I am going out, and will be here again in an hour. You will not go to bed before my return, I presume ?'

" No, I'll wait for you, Mr. Trevor," replied the boy kindly.

Although feeling a contempt for him, I could not find room in my heart to hate, and soon began to pity, and then to like him.

Not knowing where else to go, I wandered towards the Capitol or State House, and passing through the gate, into the shaded enclosure which surrounded the building, walked slowly along the gravel paths. A waning moon rose in the sky, and the light from it fell fitfully through the foliage. The atmosphere had that oppressive stillness which in summer evenings usually precedes the approach of a storm, and the leaves of the trees rustled with a low, whispering sound, as though filled with ominous forebodings. Reaching the front of the State-House, I seated myself upon the steps, at the

pedestal of a column, and looked up through the shifting leaves to the stars. "I wonder what Cora is thinking of to-night, and what she is doing—O! that some wandering spirit would tell me—is she happy?" There was silence, deep silence throughout the vast edifice—for no one appeared to occupy it at night—and I sunk into a revery. Hearing a slight noise within the shadows cast by the large columns, I looked up inquiringly. Nothing was visible, and concluding the sound was caused by rats, I moved uneasily, and at length, as my reveries ever tended to gloom and sadness, I arose from the step, and walking into the shadows of the trees, sat down upon the grass. "I feel myself unworthy of her, she is an angel, and I am—what?"

Again abstractedly falling into thoughts that would obtrude upon me, I asked myself, "Will she ever live to marry me?—that cough, ah! that premonitory symptom of a delicate body overtaxed by the restless fluttering of a weary soul. And why should I wish to wed her to my ceaseless unhappiness. My nineteenth birthday has not yet passed, and yet I seem to have lived fifty years. Time must not be counted by years, but by emotions."

The oppressive closeness of the atmosphere ceased. The wind, far away in the west, seemed murmurously approaching, as the leaves trembled and fluttered like things of life. Looking up, I saw the moon sinking slowly, sorrowfully behind black gathering clouds. Darkness drew on apace, and a vivid flash of lightning, followed by a crash of thunder, startled me to my feet. Listening with hushed breath, the night wind, no longer softly musical, as the sound of a forest fountain, moaned wildly from the fast-darkening sky.

"Cora, O my Cora! you are ill; I feel it—I know it!" and at the moment I experienced a shock as though some one had fiercely struck me in the darkness. My heart beat tumultuously; I moved forward—and as the large, heavy rain drops fell upon my head, a wild, wailing shriek, rising above the reverberation of the thunder, made me shudder with terror. Starting precipitately forward, a vague, dimly-shaped white bird flew out of the tree beneath which I

had been seated, and flapping its wings almost in my face, flew far away through the darkness. I hurried from the place toward the city, for the breeze was increasing to a fierce gale. Young trees were twisted to the earth as though invisible demons rode upon the air; branches were torn and dashed ruthlessly to the ground; dead leaves whirled about with the eddying currents, and drifted in my face. A bell in the city tolled mournfully, as though struck by the roaring winds, and the rain dashing, rushing, pouring, came down upon me as I fled wildly away.

"You are late, Mr. Trevor," said the young clerk, as I rushed in, dripping with water; "and how wild your eyes look! Have you seen a ghost?"

"Do not question me, I beg of you."

"Well, we'll go to bed then. I feel like I could sleep till—till doomsday. It's now past ten o'clock. Come, Mr. Trevor, will you go?"

"No, not now; I could not sleep. Do not wait for me."

He lighted a candle at the gas burner, which was flickering dimly, casting strange, spectral shadows far back in the long, still room, and went up stairs.

The next day was not quite so dull as the one previous. The store was thronged with coarse, rough people from the country, and Hobbins, Dunk, and myself were all kept busily employed. Goods were pulled down and scattered over the counters, then failing to please the person or persons who wished to purchase, they were all put up again, and carefully arranged upon the shelves. As soon as this was done, another invasion of customers would take place, and the things which had been so carefully placed away, would have to be dragged down and strewn upon the counters again. Hobbins, I observed, never troubled himself to replace any of the articles, although he tossed them about, and stretched them out of the folds, and then threw them impatiently aside; it was none of his business to fold the creases and wrinkles out, and put them back—that was left for myself and Dunk to do.

CHAPTER LIX.

A SHORT time after commencing business with the Messrs. Hobbins, I received a letter from my mother. She informed me that all were well, and trying to get along as pleasantly as possible. Aunt Kitty and Felix were of great assistance to her, as the former would go out and wash for the neighbors when she had finished all her work and with the money thus earned, purchase little luxuries which she was well aware my mother would deny herself. Felix would also hire himself to persons in town, and often go out in the country to labor, and his wages he would always use in buying something for the house, without speaking of it. "Such devoted, attached creatures," said my mother, "surely mistress never had before." In concluding her letter, she urgently entreated me to return home.

"Come back to me, Edgar, and leave the life you now lead, for I know it must be a burden to you. Your wealthy brother-in-law, Mr. Seaforth, shall get you into some business either here or in Louisville, which will be more compatible with your tastes and wishes. I will write to him, if you will only promise to return to me." In a postscript she stated that "Miss Cora Belmont had been unwell for a few weeks past, but was now convalescent, and had a few moments before been over to see my sister."

This, then, accounted to me satisfactorily for Cora's long continued silence, for although I had addressed her two or three times, I had never yet received a line since leaving Millville.

Helen had written to me from Niagara Falls, giving a most graphic description of her tour, but studiously avoiding any allusion to her happiness, or her feelings in relation to her husband. I feared that all was not as calmly pleasant as she would have me to

infer, but in my reply did not shadow forth any of my suspicions. Time would reveal them if they were really (and I hoped they were not) true. In answer to my mother's letter, I had informed her that I would try and return to Kentucky as soon as circumstances would permit, but that at this time she need not expect me. The fact was, I had not money sufficient to pay my expenses, and would rather have drudged in a coal mine, for the requisite amount, than have written to her for it. Although it required all my patience and self-control to endure the annoyances of my present situation, yet I resolved to remain a month or two longer.

One pleasant summer morning, as Dunk and myself were arranging the goods upon the boxes at the door, in as enticing a manner as our tastes could devise, a handsome, slender boy of seventeen or eighteen, with laughing, dark blue eyes, curling, brown hair, and a complexion of delicate, transparent bloom, passed along the street.

"Spread your nets, ye fishers of countrymen, and arrange all your baits to catch the clod-hoppers," cried he, laughing mockingly, and stopping, for he seemed to be slightly acquainted with my companion.

"Don't exhaust yourself to-day, Dunk, think of the morrow. Good morning, sir," he added, bowing gracefully to me.

I was pleased with him at first sight, and returned his salutation courteously. He was, surely, one of the handsomest boys I had ever seen. His complexion had that warm, clear, sensuous ripeness which is never seen except in early youth, though I myself still retained it, and I was nearly nineteen. His eyes sparkled with vivacity, and seemed momentarily to change in expression, and his lips were beautiful as a lovely woman's. I felt attracted to him by some inexplicable animal magnetism. What a pity it is that his delicate, peachy cheeks, and handsome chin, as well as my own, will be roughed by the hairy harshness of a beard—that hideous excrescence, the appearance of which I dreaded almost as much as the small-pox!

"You haven't been here long," observed he, leaning negligently

against a box, and pushing back his jaunty blue cloth cap, as he watched me trying to arrange a bright-colored piece of lawn, so as to fall in graceful folds over the window.

"Only a few weeks; I left Kentucky the seventh of last month—"

"Left Kentucky!" repeated he eagerly, "are you also from the dear old State? why, I myself am a Kentuckian."

Our eyes met in delighted surprise, and we impulsively shook hands. His was small and delicately shaped, and as it touched mine I experienced a thrill of pleasure which tingled through all my nerves. He apparently underwent the same magnetic sympathy, for he held my hand somewhat longer than was necessary, and pressed it as though I had been a woman. Some persons who have never undergone such sensations as these, may doubtless say this is all imaginary, sentimental nonsense. It is no such thing—for I appeal to sensitive, nervously organized persons, who have, perchance, experienced the same feelings in meeting with young persons of their own sex, and touching their hands, to answer if it is not true.

"And may I ask your name?" said I, disengaging my hand and extending him my card. Accepting it, he bowed and offered me his. I read, in delicate characters, which were not engraved, but written with a pencil, "Leslie Vernon."

"Excuse me, Mr. Trevor, I must be off, it gets late, and as I also am in the effeminate rag business, my *employer*," and he threw a bitter, ironical emphasis upon the word, "will think I am idling away hours which, of right, belong to him, as I have sold them to him—'for a consideration.'—Be sure and call and see me," and giving me the name of the house where he was staying, and waving me a salute with his hand, he hurried away.

"Do you like young Vernon?" asked I, turning to Dunk, who had laughed sneeringly as the bright-eyed boy left us.

"No, I do not. He's always making sport of people that don't happen to know as much as he does. If he *is* so very talented, why

doesn't he do something else ?—I'm sure it don't take a very smart fellow to make a dry good's clerk."

"That is a fact, Dunk. I see living exemplifications of the truth of your observation." The boy eyed me curiously, but did not appear to see the drift of the remark.

"Other clerks about town do not court the society of young Vernon, then, and I presume he is not popular ?"

"Well, he ain't much liked," replied Dunk, "the boys say he has high notions and puts on airs."

"Is it possible ?—he should endeavor to adapt himself to their capacities, poor fellow—I fancy I shall love him as a brother."

"Very likely," said Dunk, sarcastically. "Here comes old Hobbins, you'd better hurry yourself and get all these goods out."

Not troubling myself to look around, I leisurely placed two or three bolts of gingham upon the box, and gazed earnestly down the street. Mr. Hobbins, senior, came trudging along, with an old blue umbrella under his arm, and looked at me, but seemed afraid to say anything. He had formed a very high opinion of my character, as Dunk informed me confidentially, and although he doubtless thought I was wasting a few moments of his precious time, in looking about me, he had too much respect for my feelings to name it.

"What do the female Hobbinses think of me ?" I asked Dunk one day, not long after going to the place. "You board at the house, and of course hear all their remarks."

"I don't know that I ought to tell you," said the boy gravely, "it will make you mad."

"Don't fear that—speak out."

"Well," continued he, clearing his throat, "Jake's wife said, the other morning, at breakfast, that she 'didn't think you near so good-looking as her brother Pete—that you was too much like a woman to be handsome.' Then I laughed and told 'em about you always putting your hat under the shelf, to keep the dust off it, and being so perticular about your clothes. 'O,' says Miss Deborah—(that's Misses Jake's sister)—"

"The one that was in the store with her yesterday?"

"Yes," replied Dunk, resuming, "she says—laughing as like she'd got off something sharp—'O my! guess he's some poor fellow that never had many clothes, and wants to save 'em—ha! ha! ha! They all laughed then, and some of the rest of 'em said you had such small feet and hands that it was no wonder you was lazy."

"They are exceedingly complimentary. You need not tell me any more, Dunk." And I smiled as though very much amused.

"Why, I expected you'd get angry at it," observed the boy, in surprise, "but you don't appear to mind it."

He commenced brushing the dust from the counter, and I walked off to the front door.

I did not see young Vernon again until Sunday—that blessed day when clerks, fortunately, do not have to sell goods, and may freely walk abroad like other mortals. Mr. Hobbins, junior, came down to the store in the morning, and knocked loudly for admission, and although engaged in reading, I had to admit him.

"Sunday bores me, Trevor," said the man, yawning; "don't you get tired of it? I always want to be selling things and making money. Well, if I can't do anything else, I'll go up stairs and examine the ledger, because it's no use for me to go to church. I never hear the sermon, and am always wishing the day over, for it's just a dead loss, you know."

"Ah!" exclaimed I. ill-naturedly, bored beyond endurance by the man's presence and interruption.

"All the expenses of the house, you see, Trevor, are just the same as on any other day, and we don't make a cent. We'll have to pay your salary and Dunk's on Sunday just the same as Monday."

"You should deduct that amount from our wages," observed I. "It would amount to something in the course of a year."

Opening the book which I held in my hand, I took a seat and commenced reading. Perceiving from my tone and manner that he had irritated me, he hastened to reply:—

"No, no, Trevor, I was only joking. I want to do the liberal thing—always aim to be liberal with our young men."

"The ledgers are all up stairs," said I, abruptly, desiring to rid myself of his presence.

"I guess you think I'm a hard case, don't you, Trevor?

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Horrified at the blasphemous remark, I threw my book upon the counter and left the house. Going to the place where Vernon lived, I found him standing upon the door step, gazing sadly and wearily up the street.

"Musing on scenes of departed happiness, are you, Vernon?"

"Yes, and wondering where I should go to find you. I was at the store once this morning, and knocked, but no one opened to me."

"How unfortunate! I must have been at breakfast. Shall we walk out, and see if the skies are still as blue, and the fields as green as of old?"

"Yes, yes," said he, eagerly, as his bright eyes sparkled with pleasure,—"the church bells ring, but 'the groves were God's first temples.' Let us off to them."

He took my arm, and we walked silently along.

"I love the country, for I have always lived in it before coming to this place," observed my companion.

"But, ah! how different was your scenery from this!" rejoined I, as we reached the suburbs of the city, and surveyed the low, monotonous surface, dotted here and there with a lonely tree. Vernon sighed.

"My parents lived near L——, the most beautiful and picturesque portion of Kentucky, and my father being a lawyer, had an office in town, and a villa a mile out in the country."

"He is dead then," said I, tenderly, looking into his mournful eyes, that seemed dim with remembrances.

"Yes, he and my mother, and only sister—all, all are dead!— The cholera of '49 passed and swept them from me. I wish that I, too, had been taken with them."

My hand pressed the orphan boy's in sympathetic tenderness.

There was silence, and we walked slowly onward. I did not resume the conversation, and he, after a short time, coughed faintly, and commenced speaking again :—

"At my father's death I found myself penniless, and being taken by an aunt, after going to school for two years, was placed in a store to learn the dry goods business; I have been in it ever since."

Relating to him my history and disappointments, he listened with such kind attention, that for once I felt that I had a friend of my own age and sex who could understand me, and appreciate, as well as sympathize, with my feelings.

"Where are we going to, Leslie?" asked I, halting as I concluded speaking, and calling him for the first time by his christened name.

"Any where you please, Edgar. Suppose we cross the fields and go to the river."

"Well, I have never yet seen it; let us go."

And we wandered along, for we had now opened our hearts to each other, and being in a strange place, and both attached to our native State, at our age we could not long remain sorrowful. We had been favorably impressed and impelled towards each other by outward personal appearance at the first meeting, but I had almost feared to become more intimately acquainted, lest Leslie should disappoint me intellectually. I had dreaded, yet longed to try the experiment, and now, that the ordeal was passed, and he was all that I had dreamed of in a friend, an exquisite sensation of pleasure filled my whole being. For once my hopes were realized, for I could clasp his person to my heart without a feeling of shrinking dislike, and at the same time feel that he was magnetically and intellectually responsive. There are many persons whose mental abilities we respect, and whom we delight to sit and converse with, yet who, if they were to touch us, or place their arms about our necks, or in any way allow their persons to come in contact with ours, we would shrink from with a feeling akin to disgust. Again, there are others of our own sex whom we feel a sensuous pleasure in allowing to fondle our persons, yet whom, at the same time, we

look upon, intellectually, with supreme contempt, and only endure because they are animally sympathetic. After this explanation of my feelings, it is not necessary for me to say that Leslie Vernon united both these attractive characteristics in his person and found them responsively in mine.

Arriving at the river we stood sadly upon its banks.

"It is not such a stream as we had imagined, Leslie; it disappoints us."

"You have divined my feelings, Edgar; you are right. I was contrasting it with another river far away—with wild, towering, romantic banks—tortuous windings amidst glorious scenery of cliff and woodland—where the waters dash over old mossy rocks, and trees droop lovingly—where the silvery sides of swift-glancing fish gleam in its transparent depths—where secluded nooks upon its turf-covered margin are dim, dreamy with sifted sunlight falling through the leaves—and where the music of white, creamy waves, circling around the hills, and flowing into lake-like inlets, is stilled to a dream of peace. Bending willows and sycamores and ash trees shade it, and wild, rocky cliffs, spotted with flowers to their summits, uprise from it. Then there is a lonely waterfall far up in the forest, where the whipporwil and the mocking-bird sing to each other, and the ring-dove coos its notes of love. 'Twas near the home of my boyhood, Edgar, and do not wonder if I remember it with sad regrets, for I was happy then, as I bathed and swam in its cooling waters in the long midsummer days, and fished with a dreamy, listless langor upon its banks.

"But what a change," said I, "to this turbid, yellow stream, with its low, monotonous margin, where bull frogs croak hoarsely their resonant rejoicings, and dead swine infect the pure air with noxious odors."

I looked into Leslie's eyes as he leaned his head in brotherly fondness upon my shoulder, and gazed dreamily into the water. He did not see it, however, but was gazing down into the waters of the river of his childhood, and listening with hushed breath to its murmuring waves.

"Leslie!" I exclaimed, raising my voice, and rousing him as though he slept.

"Pardon me, Edgar; I heard you, but what was it?"

I laughed; and threw my arm endearingly about his neck as he circled his around my waist. We strolled along, and silently dreamed—*he* of his happy river, and *I* of one equally as wild and beautiful, where a maiden with starry eyes, and falling, raven ringlets, had met me joyously beneath the old oak trees, 'when oft the moon, of blossoms clomb the skies of June.'"

"I believe there is a creek which empties into this river, farther up—shall we walk to it?—the day is sultry, and the air is hushed and oppressive."

"Yes," answered Leslie, "and if it is clear and shady we will bathe—it will be so refreshing, Edgar—what, you do not object? there is no harm in it."

Walking circuitously and far, along the dull, sparsely-shaded river side, we finally arrived at a small, running stream, and following it up, we found that it widened and deepened into a transparent sheet of water, resembling a miniature lake. Drooping trees shaded it, and the sun streamed glitteringly upon its bosom.

"The loveliest place I have yet seen in the State!" cried my companion, throwing himself upon the mossy turf, and gazing admiringly around.

"And how cool and refreshing it looks," said I, approaching the margin, and laving my face and hands. "It is indeed so agreeably pleasant, that the temptation is too much for me—off with your clothes, Vernon, or I will have the first plunge."

We were soon undressed, and stood cooling beneath the trees.

"By the lips of Venus! Leslie, you are as handsome as the young Adonis, what swelling, tapering limbs, and——"

He laughed, and his ringing, merry voice broke like silvery arrows through the trees, as stepping back a few paces, and running forward, he leaped far into the clear, flashing water, which closed around his handsome form with loving eagerness. It was deeper than I had supposed.

"Can you swim?" said I, walking to the margin and dipping my feet into the water timidly.

"Like a fish. Back! Trevor, and throw yourself into an attitude. By the powers! do not, I beseech you, commend my figure again, or I shall think you ridicule me. Now dash forward—leap! Tally ho! bravo! bravo!"

I plunged in, and the waters churned into foam about my body, then coming up to the surface, I shot swiftly past Vernon and swam up the stream. He followed as noiselessly as a bird in air, and soon overtook me. We went as far as the depth of the water would permit, and then turning, floated listlessly back with the current. How exquisitely delightful the cool waves seemed to our feverish forms, and what ecstatic, nerve-thrilling pleasure passed through our frames! We were like electric vessels charged with the subtle fluid, and every wave we touched seemed to break into sparkles, and swell the current of our joy. As the sun rode slowly to the zenith, we reluctantly swam shoreward, and drippingly sunk upon the grass.

"I wonder if Adam and Eve ever bathed on Sunday, in the garden of Eden?"

"I presume they did, Leslie, for they had but one suit of clothes, you know, and they were in the fashion that ours are at present. The supposition is that they washed them daily."

"Beautiful! O wondrously beautiful must Eve have appeared as she first stood upon the margin of that river of the garden, and looked as I look now—and lo! behold her perfect charms trembled in the water before her, and she drew back—looked again—and blushed to find herself so lovely. For the conclusion, see Milton, and admire the gusto with which he describes the scene."

"You should not talk about our illustrious ancestors in that manner, Vernon—it is too impertinent and familiar, my dear fellow."

"It is true she had not finished her toilet then—but *apropos* of this—you have told me that you write tales for the magazines, and I have just happened to remember that *I* once wrote a poem."

"A poem!" repeated I, in surprise. "And pray, what was the subject—your mistress' eyebrows?"

"No—no," answered the boy, reclining upon the grass, and playing in the water with his well shaped feet, "I called it ——, but that is of no consequence: will you listen if I tell you all that I remember?—thank you. I will only give you the outline—now you promise not to be critical—well, here goes.

"''Twas noon in Eden, and the pictured clouds floated afar in azure, as the birds sang sweetest symphonies in spicy groves. The earth was still, and gleaming angels' wings made milky ways upon the summer sky, while seraphs, envying the bliss-laden home of 'our first father,' fluttered o'er the trees, and chanted music mid the whispering leaves. Beasts lay at rest amid the stilly air, and lions fondled with the gamboling kids. The garden seemed enchanted, and the faint perfume of rarest flowers—and far-floating, golden mists drifted along the glancing waters of the four bright rivers.

"'Sudden, a VOICE, slow sounding through the garden, broke the awaiting silence, and the flowery vales and blossom-burdened bowers trembled and echoed its majestic tones. The lions ceased their play, and wanton lambs lay lulled in fleecy folds, for all things knew and felt the presence of that awful sound. A moment, and the echoes ceased, the VOICE had passed, and lo! a lovely woman walked forth at its command. Her eyes looked to the heavens, and seemed to follow the far-retreating VOICE that thence had gone. Her waving, cloudy hair mantled her snowy form in chastity, and birds of gorgeous plumes did guide her on with songs triumphant, to her waiting lord. Adam, in sleep beneath a fig-tree, stretched his naked form. The presence passed him o'er, and from deep slumbers he trembled, rose and started to his feet. Led on by love, that in a dove-like form did flutter close before him, he approached and heard soft-falling footsteps on the dewy flowers. He stops and looks through the dim vista of the purple shadows, and, with raised hand to shade his wondering eyes, looks—looks again. A form, like his own, but O, so fair, with long wind-waving tresses, that it seemed

some lost and wingless angel, stood by the margin of the sparkling stream, and smiled and blushed at its reflected beauty. He spoke —the form looked up—started—and wildly fled. But love still lured him on, and fluttered after the bright, flying form. Adam pursued, and as the entrancing vision, with timid terror, paused to glance behind, her foot up-tripped upon a nestled rose tree, and from a height, clustered with clinging flowers, she fell down to the parting waters of a silvery stream. Adam rushed on, and as he saw her fall from out his sight, and sink into the waves, his heart beat wildly and fierce, on he plunged into the rushing river. He clasped the form, that, with white, outstretched arms, implored him his protection; then swimming to the shore, the curtained orbs slowly unveiled, and our first father, Adam, looked love into the unclosed eyes of Eve, and pillowed her wet head upon his bosom.'

"That was my poem," said Leslie, rising from the grass, "and I called it 'Love in Eden;' but it was never published, for the editors said it was so immodestly improper that they could not accept it."

CHAPTER LX.

"A LETTER for you, Trevor," said Dunk, entering the store from the post-office.

I took it eagerly.

"Wish you wouldn't read it just now, Mr. Trevor," said the elder Hobbins, twirling his spectacles in his hand. "I never like to see young clerks perusing letters in the store during business hours."

"But I can go back to the desk," I observed.

"It would be more advisable to postpone it until the evening, I think," and the old man compressed his lips as though he was determined to have his way, and force me to obey him. As he was past sixty, and had grey hairs, I indignantly placed the letter in my pocket and commenced folding up the goods which young Hobbins had scattered over the counter, leaving them for me to replace upon the shelves. There *was* a time when my spirit would have rebelled at this, but it was past.

At night, when "business hours" were over, I took the candle, and going up stairs, sat down upon the bed—for there were no chairs in the room—and breaking the well-known seal of Cora, read :—

"My pen was about to write at the top of this page, 'My own dear Edgar,' but alas! it cannot—dare not do so now. I must use that fond, endearing term no longer, for between us there is a great gulf, Edgar—I shudder to survey it. I am calm now—calmer than I have been for many days, and although a painful cough still tortures my breast and racks my whole body at times, yet, by supporting myself upon pillows, I sit up and write to you. I have dreaded this, and have postponed it for weeks, but your frenzied, burning letters, which lie around me like coals of living fire,

are heaping themselves upon my soul. It must all be told, and then you will loathingly cast me off forever. O, that you could know, without being told by me. You will hate me, my own dear Edgar, (pardon—but permit me to use the once fond words, and they shall never, never, insult you again.) Your love will blast me with its scorn, contempt and abhorrence. But oh! I *cannot* write, my eyes swim in tears, sobs choak me, and that dreadful cough has just passed over my frame again, like a fierce wind, chilling me as a blast from the lips of Death.

"O my God, that I could die and Edgar never know my secret; then, then he would still love me, would moisten my lowly grave with his burning tears, and believe me as pure as those hovering angels that bear the freed spirits of the blest to heaven. Courage! weak, fainting soul, all must be told, and now—it *shall* be, for duty commands me.

"I will forget—would that I could!—those bliss burdened hours of the past, when your soul, my Edgar, (I *cannot* help it, but must still call you mine) looked through those glorious eyes—the windows of the imprisoned immortals—and whispered to my eager-listening ear your wealth of love. What tenderness, what delicacy, what refinement, what manly courage, to bear me up through life!—And shall I lose them all through no fault of my own, and never more look into those yearning eyes of yours?—Oh—no! *no!* NO!

"Tell me! but I dare not ask you—*I* so degraded, so lost, so self-abhorred! Impossible. My temples throb! my head burns! fires, slumbering fires glow deep down in my heart—O, I am mad! mad! MAD! Bat like forms and flying fiends pass before me, and ha! ha! their demoniac laughter at my misery!

"Edgar! O, my Edgar! come to me—shield me, protect me with that manly arm—I sink beneath my sorrow, and the black waters of the cold river of death creep chilling through my veins. But I am calm now—O! very, very calm, for the storm has passed. Listen to me, and then loathe, detest me, and trample this paper—blistered with my tears—beneath your feet.

"You asked me of my mother once—the last time that we met. I could not tell you then, for I knew nothing myself. I became embarrassed, for the same question had been asked by myself numberless times, but never any answer did I receive. It troubled me, and I could not rest. 'Who is my mother?' asked I of Mr. Burten, when you had left the village. He turned from me, but I pressed him to tell me all, for I cared not what infamy might be attached to the name. He refused again and again, but wearied, at length, with importunities, (I need not here tell you all that passed between us) and suffice it to say, I learned from him what I had begged, entreated to know.—Would to God I had never, never heard it! This complexion which I so much loved, because you, dear Edgar, had called it beautiful—these eyes, which had panted and throbbingly rose to yours, as the tides rise to the round, splendoring moon, and these raven ringlets, which danced in clouds of curls—ah! you had loved them, and *I* cherished and blest them for my Edgar's sake. But now, that I knew my origin, I loathed and cursed—aye, *cursed* them, for they told me of my degradation.

"Bowing my face to hide the hot, red blushes, I compel myself to tell you all.—Now, dash me from you—scorn me—*I* be your wife and mate with your sisters, when my mother was a *quadroon*, and my father is—Mr. Burten! Never! never! I hear the knell of my dead hopes sounding crashingly in my ears, and I sink and grovel in the dust. Now, you know it all. Could I dare to look you in the eyes again, and press my hot lips to yours, and call you proudly *my* Edgar? *I*, whose mother was a slave! No, no, I am an outcast, self-degraded, self-loathed, and the only lips I shall kiss will be the icy ones of Death, as he coldly clasps me to his bosom. He is my bridegroom—I tarry wearily for his coming. This hacking cough—which I caught upon the banks of the river, where we strayed in the days of the past—tells me I shall not wait long. Mr. Burten overwhelms me with kindness, but I cannot bear his presence. He wishes me to go again to the sunny South, and speaks

glowingly of Cuba and its balmy breezes. I will not listen—life to me is not worth going so far to search for.

"Death, O, Death! my joyous bridegroom, come, clasp me to thy fleshless arms. Faintness comes upon me, I hasten to the conclusion, for the paper and lines swim dimly before my eyes—ah, that awful cough.—Farewell.—In some brighter world, in distant future years ——"

The conclusion was indistinct and illegible from ink-blots and tears, but the dear name, "Cora," was affixed, and dying "farewells" covered all the page.

How that night passed, I wish not to remember. To sleep—while Cora, morbidly sensitive, and tortured to agony by the knowledge of her origin, was lingering far distant—was impossible. Extinguishing the light, and almost envying the deep slumber which wrapped my companion in its embrace, I left the house. He is far happier than I, for no agonies of soul ever visit him, and in all the nights of his existence, not one was sleepless! Has he not told me and boasted of it, while I tossed upon the bed and prayed for peace and slumberous oblivion!

Some of the shops were yet lighted, and noisy laughter came floating upon the night air, from drinking saloons. Dull, rumbling sounds from bowling alleys, intermingled with shouts of drunken mirth and blasphemous curses fell upon my ears, as I walked madly down the street. On, on, I knew not, cared not whither, could I only rush away from *myself*. On, on, far from the city with its rattling vehicles, breaking the stillness of the starry night—past the suburbs, and into the silence of the country. Over the desolate bridge, spanning the broad, shallow river, where murderers lie in wait, and night robbers secrete themselves, and far away to the woods, and still I walked recklessly onwards, and the silent stars, with their wondering gaze, looked down in pity on me. Ah! there was one among them, the brightest of all the blazonry of heaven, which had shed its calm, silvery rays upon Cora and I, upon a night of the past, and then it smiled, for we were happy. Now it

looked sad to my weary eyes, and seemed to tremble with sympathy and yearning tenderness.

I was far out upon the road, and as I for the first time stopped, and looked into the dark forests which surrounded me, a clock in the city tolled the hours with strange distinctness, but I did not count them. The sounds ceased, and as I still listened, a shriek uttered with fearful startlingness, and prolonged into awful despair, made my soul tremble with terror. Another, and still another followed in quick succession, and seemed the last expiring breathings of a soul

> "From the roused ocean of deep hell,
> Where every wave breaks on a living shore,
> Heaped with the damned like pebbles!"

I trembled and listened as the fearful sounds died slowly away in groans and snarlings, like those of wild beasts at bay. Clanking chains seemed trailing upon a stony floor, and then a dash, as though some heavy body had fallen, and with smothered moanings, all again was still. I hurried tremblingly away, for the buildings of the State Lunatic Asylum were visible through the trees, and another succession of wild, unearthly howls intermingled with the horrid laughter of the insane, rushed through the surrounding trees. The wailing noises seemed pursuing me like some impending doom, as I fled swiftly away towards the distant city.

At the first faint dawning of day, I sat upon the door step, and waited for the clerk to open the store. Hobbins soon came down as was his custom, and telling him that I could remain in the place no longer, he paid me all that was due, and I went up to the bed room, and commenced to pack my trunk. The cars would leave in two hours.

"Where is Trevor—where's Trevor?" I heard a voice eagerly inquire below.

"Up stairs, preparing to quit us," replied Hobbins, in a sneering tone, for he hated me for leaving him.

Leslie Vernon came running joyfully to greet me, his beautiful boyish face all aglow with happiness and enthusiasm.

" Congratulate me, congratulate me, Edgar! my aunt, of whom I once spoke to you, is dead, (peace to her soul!) and has left me a legacy of ten thousand dollars."

Forgetting my own sorrows, I embraced him cordially.

" I have this moment received the letter, and will start in two hours for my old Kentucky home. This fellow down stairs tells me you are to leave him—when do you go? Only come with me, Edgar, I have enough for both, and ——"

" No, no, Leslie, my noble friend, you shall not waste your money upon me, *I* also return to Kentucky this morning. Away, and conclude your preparations—we will leave the place together."

" And the cause, Edgar—may I not know? I who am your friend, should share with you this sorrow." He placed his arm fondly about my neck, as I leaned down in placing the things in my trunk, and with his boyish tenderness and sympathy, besought me to tell him.

" Not now, Leslie," said I sadly, pressing his slender form to my bosom, " it is a long tale, and we must hasten or the train will be off before we are ready, and then you and I will have to endure another day in this hated city. When we are in the cars, and are rushing with the speed of the whirlwind, away! away! then, my dear Leslie, I will tell you all. 'Tis sweet to have one friend whom we may open our hearts to, without fear of being misunderstood, and chilled back into ourselves by coldness, when our souls are yearning for sympathy."

Vernon clasped my hand in silence, and left me.

My preparations were soon finished, for after packing my clothes there was nothing left for me to do.

I did not, therefore, have any parting calls to make, as I had not cared to go into society where a person is measured solely by the length of his purse. Mr. Brown had always treated me with politeness, and uniform kindness. I called to bid him adieu, and then stepping into a hackney coach, directed the man to drive around for young Vernon. He was locking his trunk, and shaking

hands with his fellow clerks, as we drew up. Calling to him from the carriage window, he ran down and sprang in, as the coachman strapped his baggage behind, and cracking his whip, as he took his seat, we rolled rapidly to the depôt.

In a back seat of the last car, all alone to ourselves, we sat quietly, and as the locomotive rushed swiftly, fiercely onward, with shriek and careless clatter, we murmuring, talked together—he of his anticipated happiness—for I had requested it—and I, of my sorrows and my dreads.

My young friend I was to part with at Lexington. To think of it was sorrow. We had been that all in all to each other for which our waiting souls had long, hopelessly pined; and now to separate, after such short acquaintance and unrestrained intercourse, was saddening. Those only who have felt the love which such friendships generate, can appreciate and sympathize with it, as they recall from the dead years of their youth the shadows of the past. There are no cold, calculating feelings of selfishness and worldly wisdom mingled with the gushing frankness and generous impulsiveness of those who, at seventeen and nineteen, are friends. Boys—sympathetic and magnetically responsive—love and embrace, not from worldly motives, but, like the clouds of summer, because of the impelling electric joy which fills them. Leslie Vernon and myself clasped and clung to each other as we parted, with promise of meeting again in the future; and tears—I am not ashamed to tell it—tears glistened in our eyes.

He was to return to his childhood's home, by request of his aunt's executor, and some time during the ensuing year would visit me at Millville.

The stage-coach rattled away, and his bright, boyish face, that had been to me as the creations of Raphael are to the worshiping enthusiasts of Italian art, was gone. *They* bow before motionless, unfeeling paintings; but *I*, without envy, loved, and was loved in return by a warm, living, ever-changing, varyingly-beautiful picture from the hands of the great Master—Jehovah!

CHAPTER LXI.

UPON reaching Millville, my mother welcomed me with open arms, and her fond, proud heart at the stroke of my presence, gushed forth joy, as the rock poured out its waters to the touch of Moses.

I could not rest to be in the same place with Cora, to inhale the same atmosphere that supported her misery-blasted life, to feel through the surrounding air the electric magic of her presence, and yet, for a moment, remain away. It was an evening late in September, and I went to her.

The shutters of the house were drawn to exclude the glare of light, the front door was closed, and the flowers which bordered the gravel pathway seemed drooping with sorrow at the absence of their loved protectress. Aspen trees stood in front of the house, and their foliage, with a tremulous motion, told of a ceaseless charge. Sere yellow leaves, prematurely falling, seemed to mourn as the faint breeze blew them about, and scattered them beneath my feet. There was sadness in the season, for the flowers had lived their day, and shed their bloom in death. Fruits had ripened, and the harvests were gathered by the husbandman. The tropical luxuriance and richness of the vegetation of summer had passed, and was fading into decay. Birds, even to my listening ear, sang not the out-gushing notes of riant mirth and joyousness of spring-time, when nature stands waiting upon tiptoe for the coming summer; but their songs were mellowed, like the ripened corn and the matured fruit. Through all the melody, there ran a low whisper of mournfulness, and the burden was of nameless sorrow, and told of

coming gloom in the future. A large black cat, which had been sunning itself upon the front door-step, in the dreamy stillness, eyed me curiously as I opened the gate, and waiting until I had almost approached it, uttered a low cry like the moan of an infant, and fled away. Knocking softly, I heard the sound echo through all the silent house, with strange distinctness. Several minutes elapsed, and then I could hear timid footsteps approach, and unclosing the door gently, old Mrs. Layson, with a sad, troubled expression of countenance, met me at the threshold.

"Is Cora—— ?"

I would have spoken, but my voice failed me, and an unknown something filled my throat.

"She has rested well to-day, and now sleeps," replied the widow, kindly. "Will you come in, Mr. Trevor? I have heard your name upon her lips as she seemed to dream, and she called you as a lost bird calls its mate, and flutters for its coming."

I entered.

Leading the way up the staircase, the widow passed along the passage in the second floor, and opening a door at the farther extremity, beckoned me silently to follow. It was an airy, lofty room that we entered, with cheerful walls of blue and silver paper. Two windows, draped with white muslin curtains, lighted the front. A bed stood between them, with the head to the wall, and at the bedside sat Mr. Burten, with a large fan.

He looked up as the door opened, and a glance of pleasant surprise passed over his countenance. Mrs. Layson withdrew. Mr. Burten bowed in silence, and made a gesture for me not to speak. Moving noiselessly to the other side of the room, I trembled for a moment, and sunk at the bedside, in tearless anguish. Cora lay before me! But oh! how changed since last I had seen her. She slept, and her dark, glorious eyes were veiled by the long, fringed lashes. Her hair was loosed, and swept over the snowy pillow in heavy masses of clustered ringlets. Her lips trembled as though the unsleeping soul were restlessly striving to wake the body, and

the breath came by starts, as though it caused pain. Upon the white counterpane her pale, thin hands lay tremblingly, and the blue veins wandering over them seemed currentless. Kneeling, with my head buried in 'the clothes, I heard a slight movement, and breathlessly looked up. Cora's eyes painfully unclosed, and half starting to my feet, I gazed wildly, yearningly upon her. The soul had been wandering as she slept, and awakening so suddenly we looked at each other in voiceless stillness. Did she not know me? O, fearful thought! The vacant expression slowly vanished—the spirit returned to its tenement, and as of old, in by-gone, happy moments, lighted up those wondrous, starry eyes, and through them looked into mine.

"Cora!"

"Edgar!"

She gave me her hand, so thin, and hopelessly dear. Kissing it again and yet again, I only released it to moisten the blue-veined fingers with my tears. She wished to be raised, and Mr. Burten, with gentle fondness, supported her form with pillows. Pressing my hand in silence, he tearfully left the room.

Cora and I were alone—for the last time, perhaps, in life! A feeling of awe stole over me, as though I felt the presence of an angel. With a smile, spiritual in the lustre of its glory, Cora turned to me as I stood bending over the bedside.

"My letter—did you receive it, Edgar?"

"Yes, Cora, and it brought me here to tell you of a wilder, intenser love, passing the love of mortals."

"O, Heavenly Father, I bless and thank thee."

With clasped hands and upraised eyes, she seemed to pierce the dark veil of the unknown world, and revel in the resplendency of its celestial sunlight.

I looked, and prayed, and wondered while I loved.

"Cora, may we not yet be happy? The past, with its sad memories, shall be forgotten. Speak to me—tell me, O rapt gazing seraph, will you not linger for me?"

"In Heaven, my Edgar, and there upon its gleaming parapets, with countless waiting angels, will I tarry for your coming—but on earth, never! See these seals of the Immortals upon my hectic, burning cheeks—do they not tell you all?"

"Do not, O, do not speak thus, Cora—pray to the hovering spirits to let you linger with me—O my God, let us but live here, or dying, live eternally hereafter!"

"I have listened to the whispering voices—my soul as I slept, soared upon exploring wings, and to-morrow, at sunset, my Edgar, I will leave you!"

"No! no! I will pray with head bowed in the dust—I will dash my soul at the footstool of the Omnipotent, and with wild, wailing cries beseech your presence—I will do all ——"

"Peace, peace, dear Edgar! the decrees of God are immutable. I have loved you—O! so wildly and so madly, that in you I have sometimes forgotten there was a Deity. He calls, to convince me, and I go!"

Moaning in agony, my soul rebelled against the divine decree, as harsh, cruel and unjust.

"Look! Edgar, how the angels hover over us—they smile to me—their burnished plumes graze your curling hair—see! up! up! —Ah, too late, they fly away.—They are gone!—gone! My poor canaries sit silent in their cages; my flowers in the windows droop their heads; my books, with their burning lines, lie voiceless upon the tables; my guitar, with its broken strings, shall never more to the touch of these mortal fingers, tell to you my love, and O! my Edgar, with his burning tears, would wet my wings to keep me with him still."

She fell back, fainting, upon the pillows—her eyes closed wearily, as though Death's icy fingers pressed them—her pulse ceased, and I shrieked wildly for assistance.

Mr. Burten, Mrs. Layson, and my sister Bel, who had just arrived, came hurriedly in, with fearful looks.

We supported her almost lifeless form, and applied restoratives. After a long time she opened her eyes painfully, but fell again into a swoon. These succeeded each other in quick succession, and then with a spasmodic tremulousness she slowly sunk back and seemed to sleep. The sun was sinking, and we opened the windows which looked to the westward, to admit the faint breeze, fluttering like a timid bird from the distant forest. The clouds, of wildly, irregular shapes, spreading far over the sky, were gorgeous with purple, and crimson and violet, fringed and edged with gold.

We watched with Cora as the bright tints faded away—and as the twilight grey, with trembling footsteps, came gently on. And it also vanished in the darkening embraces of the night, and the stars, in the far-away seas of heaven, came into view, like the distant isles of the blest. And all through the night, with its solemn stillness, we watched and wept, until morning spread the clouds with crimson and gold, as courtiers spread rich, tinted robes for the advancing chariot of a king.

Cora awoke at sunrise. She talked so cheerfully and with such gay delight, that we thought her greatly improved, and consoled ourselves with the hope that she would yet be spared to us many weeks. I kissed her extended hand with reverence, and left the house.

"Do not be absent many hours, Edgar, you will not see me long."

Mr. Burten and my sister turned away to hide their tears.

"Only a short time, dear Cora," said I, covering my face.

She smiled in sweet mournfulness, and wearily brushing back her dark, heavy masses of curls, which none could prevail upon her to part with, laid her head upon the pillow.

In the afternoon she felt so much better—so strong—as she told my sister and Mrs. Layson, that she would sit up and dress herself. They attempted, in vain, to persuade her that the exertion, in her present weak, exhausted condition, might prove fatal. Cora persisted, and thinking it was one of those unaccountable whims which consumptives are often subject to, they reluctantly consented to allow her to rise.

When I came into the room, (having been detained unavoidably,) she was sitting in a large arm-chair, dressed in a snowy muslin robe, richly trimmed with lace—her dark, waving hair, braided back with jewels, and a necklace of pearls upon her throat.

The dress floated about her, and rose and fell with the passing breeze—for the windows were open, and the perfume of dying flowers swept through the apartment—and to me, as I entered, she appeared, in the 'dim, religious light,' to be surrounded with vapory clouds. A feeling of holy awe crept over me, as advancing to where she sat, I fell upon my knees at her feet. My sister Bel was at the window, replacing the broken string of the guitar, for Cora had wished to sing. Mr. Burten gazed out into the garden, and strove to appear cheerful. Cora had never looked so woudrously, spiritually beautiful, for her luminous eyes throbbed with the lustre of supernal brightness, and her cheeks were tinted with crimson.

" Now, Bella, dear, it is tuned—give it to me, Edgar; I long to sweep its loved strings once—*only once more.*"

Arising, I brought the instrument, and placing it gently in her hand, again sat down beside her.

" Have you ordered a carriage, father?" she asked, looking towards Mr. Burten, as her fingers trembled upon the strings.

I glanced at Cora in amazement, and supposed her mind was wandering. Never having heard her call Mr. Burten father, this also surprised me, for I had altogether forgotten that she was, indeed, his daughter.

" Yes, my child, it wlll be here presently."

" You are astonished, Edgar! did you not know that I have begged them to allow me to ride out this evening? We will drive, as in days gone by, upon the shaded road, by the side of the rushing river. I will see, once more, the white foam of waves, and listen, yet again, to the murmuring of waters. The air is so balmy, and I feel so strong, that the ride will release me from this choking cough—I am sure that I shall never feel it again."

She smiled that strange, mournful smile, which always saddened me, and her eyes gleamed with prophetic light. Then swelling her form proudly, and by an effort dilating her throat, she struck the chords of the guitar with her tapering fingers, and a thrill of wondrous music swept through the room. We listened, wrapt and awe-struck as her voice in plaintive sadness hushed us to stillness, while she sung—

" I'm wearing awa, love,
Like snaw when it's thaw, love,
I'm wearing awa, love,
To the land o' the Leal.

There's nae sorrow there, love,
There's neither cauld nor care, love,
The day is aye fair, love,
In the land o' the Leal.

Then dry that tearfu' ee, love,
My soul langs to be free, love,
And angels beckon me, love,
To the land o' the Leal.

Now, fare ye weel, my ain love,
This warld's care is vain, love,
We'll meet and aye be fain, love,
In the land o' the Leal."

Deep silence, broken only by low sobs of anguish, pervaded the apartment. The last, wailing strain died away upon the wandering wind

A noise startled us—the guitar fell heavily upon the floor. We looked up as the carriage-wheels sounded in the street below—the sun had set, and Cora—O, my God!—Cora was cold in death.



CHAPTER LXII.

THEY told me, when the long fever passed, that they had buried her in her white robes, with the jewels still braided in her dark, glossy hair.

But I knew it all. I had felt the oppressive closeness of the coffin lid, as it was remorselessly screwed down—I had felt the dull, heavy clods falling, falling, with eager haste upon the loved form, which they had torn from me to hide amidst the cold mildews of earth.

In the village graveyard, beneath an aspen-tree, where the doves came to build their nests, and with plaintive sadness cooed their notes of love, they had laid my Cora, and heaped the turfy-mound, planted with myrtles and wild-roses above her.

It oppressed me—the thought of it.

They should have buried her upon the brow of some high, gleaming mountain, whose topmost pinnacle trembled amid the stars! Where the free, wild winds of heaven swept its summit, and the eagles rushed, screaming upon the gale—where angels' footsteps had pressed as they descended to earth—where the chants and songs of the Immortals could be heard, drifting, drifting, downward from the blue boundlessness of heaven!

* * * * * * *

A year had passed—I was now twenty. My life was yet before me, but the heart which a God of Love had given me, was mouldering in a coffin. Remaining at Millville, with my mother, I knew not, cared not where the means to support my existence came from. Better, far better cease to exist, than be for ever reminded of it, by having to toil for its support. My mother spoke gently to me on

my twentieth birthday. This life, which could not be annihilated, must be endured. Something must be done, and I applied for and received the post of assistant-editor of a neighboring village newspaper.

All through the week I drudged at my profession, and upon Sunday returned and spent the day with my mother, at Millville.

My first wild grief had subsided into a ceaseless, brooding sorrow. At times I was happy, for the natural elasticity of our physical natures cannot be always repressed. And at my age, Hope, notwithstanding the drenching storms of disappointment, of anguish, and tears, that weighed down her wings, "still sprang eternal."

I might in after life, marry, but could never love with the glorious impetuous gush—the wild vehemence—the free spontanity of youth—for in reality, we *love* but once in a life-time, and the passion with the death of the object exhausts itself.

A few weeks after my engagement as associate editor of the village paper, I returned home late one Saturday evening, and my fond, affectionate mother, who had by her tenderness soothed me to the calmness of endurance, kissed, as she embraced me, and told me that she had two letters, which had arrived during my absence, lying away for me. "Bring them, Bella, for Edgar."

My sister—so very, very dear to me now, since she had nursed and waited upon the dead Cora, and mingled her tears with mine, upon her silent grave—came forward and gave to me the packets. We kissed each other in silence, as we always did after my return from a week's absence, and my sister gently shaded the lamp for me to read.

"How sad and weary you look, my dear boy, and what deep purple circles about your eyes—I fear your occupation is too confining. Would that we were wealthy enough for you to travel."

"I am quite well, dear mother, and satisfied with my profession. I fear to open these letters," said I, "for the last one that I received, only a few months ago, announced to me the death of poor Leslie Vernon, and one of these, I perceive, is sealed with black."

"But then it is a Scottish post mark, my son."

"I cannot bear it, mother—who should be writing to me? I have no correspondence in this world—nor do I want any. Will you place them away, Bel—or open them for me? This," I added, turning the other envelope and examining it absently, is from Washington City."

My sister took the foreign letter, and as my mother drew up her chair and pressed her eyes, Bel tremblingly broke the black seal, and opened it. Having also removed the envelope of mine, I read,

"Dear Edgar Trevor:

"I have dreamed long, and, with tearful hopefulness, wondered and asked myself since last we met, (O, sad, unfortunate moment,) does he—can he ever banish my image, and forget my love, even as the sun forgets the flowers it has nourished into bloom? And still, I weary myself with conjectures, and vex my soul with doubts. I will write to him, murmured I, eagerly, he will forgive it by reason of my acknowledged love. And then he dare not address me first, even if he loved me, for he knows not that I am free. So I write, Edgar Trevor—will you call it bold and unwomanly?—Forgive me, I am years older than yourself, and this shall be my excuse. I have much, very much to tell you, but not all in this letter. When we meet, (hope whispers me, we shall,) then the lips which have once—only once for a short moment of burning, soul-electrifying joy, been touched to yours—these lips, Edgar Trevor, shall tell you all of the past, and (may it not be so, dear one?) breathe in low love-murmurs, the glowing hopes of the future.

"When last I saw you from the window of my father's house, and strove to look through the mists of tears and sorrow, you were driven away from me, amid the dreary falling rain. Long I watched, and waited for you to write to me, but alas! you did not, for I was married, and your noble nature would not, even in thought, wound my feelings. Your letter never arrived, and I left Washington with my husband—for he came for me—and we passed through Philadelphia *en route* for our southern home. He had not heard

your name—for my parents whispered not a syllable of what had occurred—but *I* had hung like a bee above it, as I turned the pages of the register in the old Hall of Independence, and felt my heart give an impulsive, involuntary bound at the sight.

"'What agitates you, Evaleen?' asked my husband kindly, as I pressed upon his arm.

"'A name which startled me by its unexpectedness—but let us hasten, it grows late.'

"Could you have been in the city then, and I not have felt the electric influence of your presence? My husband hurried me away—the cars left in half an hour for New York—he had urgent engagements there, and I left Philadelphia without knowing more of you.

"'O, sorrow and disappointment, we shall never meet again,' and surrounding echoes, audible only to my soul, repeated 'never! never!'

"Like the angels who fell from their seats in heaven, their wings heavy with the love of earth, we enjoyed but a few days of bliss, and then came the deluge, and you upon beating pinions fled far away.

"My poor husband adored me with all the heart he had remaining, but alas, the world, or some hopeless early attachment, had almost exhausted it. I could not love him, although I was true to my marriage vows, and what more could he ask? Gratitude I did feel, but nothing more.

"He died.

"Twelve months ago this night, have the magnolias waved their dark green leaves above his distant tomb—and twelve months have I worn the weeds of the widow.

"He has passed into the realm of infinite intelligence, and doubtless knows all now, but he knows also, that I am pure, and as his wife, never wronged him. Spirit! that hoverest over me, and readest, perchance, these lines, pardon—pardon—and bless me!

"Shall we not see each other in Washington, this winter, dear

Edgar? I cannot go into society, it has no charms for me *now*. Forgive the improprieties of this letter, and let me say—as the clock in my lonely bedroom tells midnight—*Au revoir*.

"EVALEEN DERBY.

"*Washington City, Oct. 25th.*"

My mother and sister had finished reading their letter, but though evidently nervous and excited, had, with delicate tact, waited until I also concluded and looked up.

"Glorious news, Edgar—glorious, but sad—read."

They thrust the paper into my extended hand.

It was a letter from the attorney of Sir Charles Crawford, and in brief business terms, notified me of his sudden death at one of his seats in the Highlands, where he had gone to hunt.

The writer informed me also, that Sir Charles, in his will, made a short time before his death, had left me a legacy of twenty thousand pounds, which sum was subject to my orders, and was now deposited with the late Sir Charles' banker, in London.

A sealed note was enclosed in the attorney's epistle, which he said the baronet had directed him to forward to me.

My mother and Bel had not opened this, and I broke the crested seal and read:—

"From the agonies of a hopeless death-bed, Edgar Trevor, I write to you this letter. Listen to its contents—then curse the dying author of all your many sorrows. I have wronged you—your mother—your dead father—whom in the next world I shall never meet—thank God for that! for there will be a great gulf between us—I have wronged you all.

"*I* it was who intrigued and caused the ruin of the man for whom your father endorsed, and thus plunged him into embarrassments which rendered the sale of Aspenwold necessary. When I met you in the woods for the first time, and assisted you to arise, I had just successfully planned the fall of your father. You drew back from me instinctively, and shook me from you, as your bright, boyish eyes gleamed upon my deformed person, and seemed to accuse and taunt me with my treachery. With exultation and delight I

heard of the sale of the home of your childhood, and the departure of the proud mistress of Aspenwold to an humble village obscurity.

"Like a shark that follows in the wake of a ship which contains the death-doomed, and with tireless, fiend-like perseverence, still pursues, so I ever watched your family's movements, and at length your father died. My exultant joy could not be concealed—you know the rest—I need not weary you.

"In my will I have left you a legacy of twenty thousand pounds, as a slight remuneration for the losses I have caused. Gladly would I have given you more, but my fortune is exhausted by my profligacy and extravagant carelessness—my estates are entailed and I cannot control them.—But my eyes grow dim—I cannot survive much longer. Could I dare to ask for your forgiveness—but no, no.

"If there—is—a—hell—"

"Sir Charles, after writing this far," continued the letter, in a different hand-writing, "was seized with violent convulsions, during which he was with difficulty restrained from putting an end to his existence in the fierce delirium of his agony. 'Back! back! ye fiends—I am not ready yet! My hour is not come, and I defy you—ha! ha!—Loose me! I feel your chains upon my limbs—your breath scorches and consumes me.—Avaunt! away!'

"'O! holy, Almighty God, stretch out thy hand and save me—they drag me down, down!—The lurid waves of hell are roaring in my ears—demons howl around me, and fly away in the eternal gloom of you roofless pit.'

"He raved in this manner until near midnight, when he succeeded—for he seemed endowed with superhuman strength—in throwing off the five or six persons who held him, and breaking away with an awful shriek, rushed fiercely through the long corridors of the castle. Although instantly pursued, he gained the summit of a neighboring tower, and before assistance could reach him, uttered a wild, despairing cry of anguish, which reverberated and reëchoed from the lonely hills, and then, with a frantic leap, dashed himself into the roaring torrent beneath."

I folded the letter, and we sat motionless, in awe-struck amazement, as though some wandering spirit from the habitations of the lost, had passed through the room, and left us trembling in terror, with its moan of hopeless remorse.

* * * * * * *

* * * * * * * *

In a few weeks I expect to start for Washington City, where I shall meet my charming Mrs. D., and then—then—something very pleasant will occur, doubtless.

My mother and Bel have promised to accompany me, and after the—well, I suppose I shall have to confess it, but I did not intend to do so—after the—the—wedding, we are all going to Europe.

I regret exceedingly that Fanny and Helen cannot go with us, but they have their husbands to take care of, you know, and will have to stay at home.

Mr. Burten left the village immediately after my poor Cora's death, and I have since heard, returned to England.

I am happy to say, that my mother and I were agreeably disappointed in Mr. Seaforth. Helen has assured us that they are as happy as could be expected, and although her husband was somewhat astonished, after the marriage, to discover that he had wedded a woman instead of an ornamental house-keeper, as he had anticipated, yet he has now become resigned *to his fate.*

I, sometimes, almost tremble when I pause to survey the future. An accusing restlessness broods over me, and I ask myself, when I stop to think of the past, "am I acting altogether right in this matter?" But then I remember that "the living are not envied of the dead," and think, perhaps, that I may yet be happy.

I will hope, I will believe, and as the laughing blue eyes of sweet Evaleen—*my* Evaleen—gaze into mine, I will fall into the arms of the charmer, and dream that life is once again all sunshine and the earth all brightness.

But, ah! the lost one cannot be forgotten.

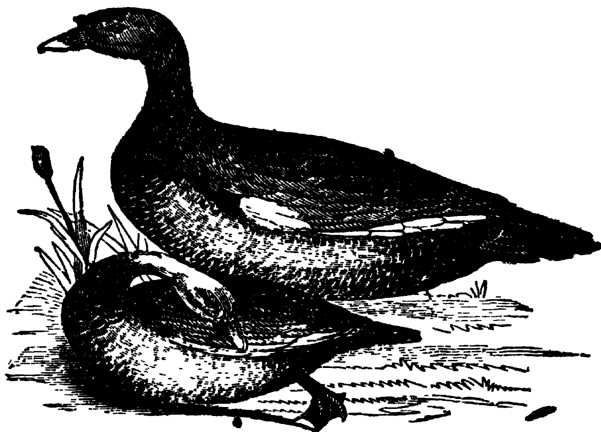
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